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HUNGARIAN PAGEANT

TO THE MEMORY OF PETER A. W. VAN DEN BOSCH
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

p1

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HUNGARIAN PAGEANT

LIFE, CUSTOMS AND ART OF THE HUNGARIAN PEASANTRY

By

ALEXANDER F. KAROLYI

WITH SIXTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS AND SEVEN SONGS

COVER DESIGN BY
HANNAH DALLOS AND GITTA MALLÁSZ

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FOREWORD

The image we bear in our minds of a foreign nation, of the land and its people, is rarely a clear-cut notion derived from first-hand experience or reasoned research. It is, rather, a medley of schoolday reminiscences, odd little fragments we have seen, read, or heard; anecdotes and the fading imprint of hazy impressions which people we thought to belong to the nation have made upon us. This mosaic of thought is naturally most indefinite. The restoration of its contours, the touching in of the colours, we simply leave to our imagination . . .

There are a few countries which, because of their material importance, their brilliant history, or their intellectual achievements, live in our imagination with greater clarity and more exactitude than the rest. But with other countries, particularly the smaller ones, it is mostly some colourful or queer trait which catches our fancy, and through countless repetitions, becomes the image which fills the mental eye when we think of that nation.

When the average person thinks of Hungary, more often than not he calls to mind a picture in which patches of vivid colour stand out sharply from the rest. These are the notions of wild and languorous music, whirling, fiery dances, tasty food and the lifting dizziness of the word T o k a y, pretty, coquettish women, and starlit nights reflected in the Blue Danube or hovering over the endless Hungarian

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plain with fierce riders galloping towards the fleeting horizon in the treacherous atmosphere of the mirage.

In a way this is a picture of Hungary, but it is only an idealized (we might almost say, perverted) picture of the tourist Sunday of the passing visitor, looked at from the angle of fancy and seen through the lens of imagination. The truth is closer to the earth, to the blessed, life-spending Hungarian earth made fertile by the toil and sweat of its labourers, whose week is a week of work and not of merry-making holidays. Their holidays are not days of dissipation, but days of well-nigh religious festival in which every act is an act of holy ritual, the picturesque enactment full of meaning of faith in life itself.

The folk-art and lore of Hungary are a living illustration of this truth. Art to Hungarian life is what the summer sunshine is to the Hungarian fields, and the events of Hungarian folk-lore are the events of the unwritten Hungarian calendar in which the days of the year and the unwinding string of peasant life appear animated with the fascinating quaintness of Hungarian character.

The symbolism itself is clear and simple, but its unbroken clarity is composed of all the colours of the rainbow, and its simplicity possesses the unsoundable depth of the eternal. It dares to be merry, of course, and has no fear of happiness in which it embraces everything there is between the blazing Hungarian sky and the Hungarian fields laden with the blessings of divine Providence. It permeates Hungarian life with the faith of those who are close to the earth, and it is above all this quality of the genuine which makes the magic of Hungary and captivates everyone who really knows and understands Hungarian life.

A. F. K.

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THE TRADITION OF THE PEARLY BOUQUET

Beginning in 1931, a few years ago the Pearly Bouquet was meant to be only an extra diversion among so many, a graceful surprise to the visitors to Budapest on St. Stephen's Day, day of King Stephen, founder and Patron Saint of Hungary. It was conceived to be a flashing sample of Hungarian folk-art and folk-lore for the passing visitor too hurried to go beyond the walls of the Hungarian capital, not knowing that the "different," the fascination of the "unusual," the eternal quest and ultimate pleasure of world-travellers tuned to the velvety speed of international Pullmans, lay there waiting in the whitewashed quaintness of tiny Hungarian villages hidden amidst the undulating waves of whispering wheat hardly a stone's throw beyond the city gates.

It was a venture born perhaps in a moment's happy fancy, or in response to an untold necessity, which brought to Budapest a handful of robust peasant folk: healthy and handsome Hungarian youths and shyly smiling Hungarian maidens, accompanied by a careworn village teacher, who came one evening to sing and dance in the City Theatre before a few hundred sophisticated foreigners and about as many of the inhabitants of Budapest.

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545 The sparkle of the genuine, the charm of this un-
186 trained little group's simple sincerity, and the bewildering variety of colour, movement, and melody captivated this at first so indifferent audience. The echo of their success found the response of the Press, and their nascent fame overflowed the City Theatre and the city itself, to become overnight the beginning of a nation-wide movement and an international success that knew no boundaries.

The small number of pioneering villages was followed by many hundreds; the few little dances and acts of the beginnings have grown into thousands, and the quaint name of the first performance, "Pearly Bouquet," became the designation of a national endeavour, the "trade-mark" of an internationally famed artistic achievement.

Today the Pearly Bouquet has a chapter, a working organization, in nearly every Hungarian village, and the number of remembered folk-songs, retold little dramas, reborn dances, and revived customs is almost countless, as is the wealth of recollected folk-costumes.

Millions of Hungarians and many hundred thousand foreign visitors have admired and applauded the Pearly Bouquet in Hungary and during its appearances at the international folk-festivals in London, Hamburg, Cannes, Nice, and Vienna, to mention only a few of the major stations in the unbroken line of conquering, irresistible success.

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The Pearly Bouquet could best be defined as the self-expression of the Hungarian soul in its full holiday splendour; the translation into terms of dancing, singing, picturesque customs, and colourful costumes of the festive spirit of the Hungarian people. It is a representative collection of the most characteristic Hungarian dances, of the most beautiful and most typical Hungarian

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SUNDAY MORNING

Photo R. Balogh

[facing p 10]

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545 songs, a variety of miniature peasant dramas, and a selec-
186 tion of the quaint ancestral customs of the Hungarians, enacted on national holidays in a natural setting by the prettiest girls and the handsomest men of a strikingly beautiful race, famed for its spirit, its gaiety, its vivid imagination, its temperamental ways, its love of music, and the unequalled splendour of its gorgeous folk-costumes.

The Pearly Bouquet is also a nation-wide organization, a co-operative society for the revival and preservation of Hungarian folk-lore in all its forms: of the picturesque folk-costumes, of the native dances and songs, and of the various native customs connected with practically every event of some importance in the life of the Hungarian peasant — wedding-celebrations, harvest and vintage festivals, and the multitude of holiday celebrations at Easter, Whitsuntide, and Christmas, which even in our days are observed with striking vividness and in a bewildering variety all over the country.

It would be, however, the gravest mistake to think that the Pearly Bouquet Society is nothing but a conventional folk-lore society addicted to the routine work of collecting data about folk-lore for the preservation of national characteristics and the like. It is, rather, a spontaneous natural phenomenon, one of the most truly remarkable ones of modern times, in which the country-folk and their leaders, the village priest, the village teacher, and the notary enthusiastically co-operate in bringing back to full life, to complete revival, the natural self-expression of the Hungarian people which has been endangered and sometimes impaired by the encroaching material civilization.

In fact the Pearly Bouquet has become an essential part of Hungarian national existence, an important com-

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545 ponent of Hungarian national life, answering in its func-
186 tions a deep-rooted national necessity: the urge for the free, and at the same time solemn, self-expression of the folk-spirit itself. There is nothing factitious about this. it is life itself, or rather an angle, one of the most essential angles of real life in which the Hungarian folk-character reflects itself in the light of its aspiration for the Beautiful, for the Eternal, and for the Sublime. No one who has witnessed the Pearly Bouquet could have failed to feel, to realize, that it is an expression surging from the unsoundable depths of the ages and of the national soul of which the individual is hardly more than an unconscious carrier.

The Pearly Bouquet is the crystallization of these aspirations, showing in retrospect the condensed and idealized memories of a thousand years of tribal existence on the Steppes of the East, and of another millennium integrated into the West, lived on the Hungarian lowlands, on the limits of the Orient and spent in the defence of the Occident, by the Hungarians in an always dualistic, hyphenated existence. Thus the Pearly Bouquet constitutes the most convincing proof to the effect that popular national art, meaning the ultimate development in the primitive art of the people of a nation, can have its roots only in the ancestral traditions and flourish only on the national soil.

186 The Pearly Bouquet also shows the wonderful elasticity of a nation which alone of so many was able to get a firm foothold on the cross-roads of the people's eternal migration, and which alone of so many was able to keep its stand for a thousand years in the face of ceaseless onslaughts from the East and against the assimilating tendencies of the West. The Hungarian people could accomplish this feat only by being, in a sense, the most

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occidental and at the same time the most oriental of 186
European peoples. It could accomplish it only by embracing and fully adopting the institutions and the spirit of Western civilization and contributing to Western culture in many ways, and by keeping and preserving the life-giving strength, the flexible vigour, and the conservative traditions of its Eastern origin. The vicissitudes of a thousand trying years in the very storm-centre of Europe only helped to bring out in these true sons of the earth the spirit of self-assertion, the determination to live, of a nation which was born to rule and destined to survive.

National folk-lore in almost every instance goes back 000
to the beginnings of a people's national existence and keeps traces at least of the original myths, religions, symbols, and superstitions of a people. Nearly always the myths and symbols of the old and the religions and the interpretations of the new may be discerned in an intertwining superposition of forms, of which at times it is so hard to tell whether they are the substance of the new clad in the form of the ancestral, or the essence of the old surviving in the guise of the new. For the proper understanding it is necessary to know in broad lines at least the different phases of the national development, their cause, their motive, their purpose, because only by knowing the sources can the meaning of any national folk-lore be determined. This affirmation holds true with special weight in the case of the Hungarians.

The Hungarians are a people who came forward 186
from the European slopes of the Ural and from the shores of the Caspian Sea and the Aral Lake, like so many other peoples before and after them. But they were one of the very few to adopt the culture of the West fully and to retain at the same time the essence of their ancestral ways of life, the festive forms of their celebrations, and their

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186 splendid distinctive national costumes. Apart from religion — they at once instinctively embraced Western Christianity and pledged themselves thereby inseparably to the West — they kept all their traditions, and, what is still more significant, they perhaps alone of all migrating peoples kept, from the second century A. D. up to our days, their faithful domestic animals taken in their wanderings from the highlands of the Ural to the lowlands of Europe, where, as in times of old, they still have their fierce-looking long-horned cattle, their fighting jet-dark sheep, of which the blade-horned ewes are as strong and wild as the rams, and their faithful dogs of unsurpassed intelligence. They alone kept their typical ways of cultivation, their gorgeous folk-costumes, and the wealth of their essentially unchanged folk-lore.

High up in Central Europe, bordering on Poland, Austria, and Bohemia, they were the buffer state between the East and the West for more than a thousand years, from 896 to our days, in an unending sequence of defensive wars against all sides. Whether it was fate or coincidence, the alternating epochs of national greatness and of national decline always corresponded more or less closely to the revival and the neglect of proved national traditions. It can be clearly traced that fidelity to the National has always helped Hungary to maintain and assert herself, while the laxity of prosperous periods was invariably followed by periods of national calamity. These times of decline could not have been fought and won without reaching back to the inexhaustible reservoir of national resources and proved national traditions. This was true as far back as the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, in the times of repulsed Tartar invasions, throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, during the times of Turkish domination, and ever since

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the eighteenth century in the mute and stubborn defence against Austro-German aspirations of assimilation. Hungarians simply did not want to surrender, and as long as they were able to assert their national identity they did not have to surrender. Until as late as 1867, when the agreement known as the Compromise between Austria and Hungary came into being, the provincial population of Hungary, the magnates, the gentry, the citizenry, and the peasants, kept their racial and national characteristics almost intact — and that in the face of Austrian incursions into all domains of public and private life, despite the gradual increase of foreign nationalities who, seeking and finding refuge from annihilation by the Turks, settled and took firm root in Hungary during the centuries of Turkish wars. To the force of mighty Austria the Hungarians did not bow; over the settling refugees to whom they instinctively considered themselves superior they remained masters, and with them they did not mingle.

The symbolic expression of this national resistance, of this national self-assertion, was the way all Hungarians dressed and acted in public and in private life, so that the typically Hungarian in dress and in other forms and ways of life was in Hungarian history always the most accentuated in times of national emergency. It was only too natural for it to culminate in the period from the supressed War of Independence in 1849 to the signing in 1867 of the agreement between Austria and Hungary commonly known as the Compromise. During this period Hungarian costume-art and Hungarian folk-lore in general attained their peak; the dignified, rich gala costumes of the Hungarian magnates and gentry were to be seen everywhere, and the attire of the peasant population blossomed into the colourful flowers of fantasy.

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186 The prosperous and peaceful decades which followed
178 the Compromise,[1] and which came to an end only in the disaster of the World War, brought with them the gradual decline of the national spirit, a reaction in which much of the native originality in Hungarian folk-lore, folk-art, and folk-costumes was tarnished and often altogether lost. The magnates and gentry gave up their grudge against Austria; an emancipated citizenry of tradesmen and artisans was born which gained in importance rapidly, and whose plain attire and quiet colourless life became a triumph of unimaginative uniformity. In such circumstances the peasantry lost its bearings; seeing their landlords discard the venerated Hungarian gala, the peasants began to feel uneasy before the urban masses, which in number and importance gradually supplanted the impoverished gentry, and whose plain, business-like garments contrasted so strikingly with the peasants' picturesque, fanciful attire . . .

178 The transformations of the technical era and compulsory military service only hurried this development so damaging to Hungarian folk-lore. The young peasant folk were attracted in ever-growing numbers by the factory wages paid in ringing cash at the end of the working day, and many a proud plainsman's son failed to realize that he became and remained a day-labourer, his effaced existence dependent on the trend of business and subject to the whim of a foreman or of an inconsiderate employer. The false glamour and deceiving comforts of domestic service took an equally heavy toll. Then every year hundreds of thousands of lads under twenty-one were conscripted, and on their return, after an absence of three long, transforming years, they eyed the quaint ways of the village with a sort of surprised misgiving. The factories started pouring out their cheap,

1 [The agreement between Austria and Hungary in 1867--Analyst]

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mass-produced merchandise upon the countryside, and before long the existence of the village became transformed to its foundations.

In 1914, against her own interests but living up faithfully to the terms of her Alliance, Hungary took part in the World War. After the disaster Hungary was mutilated to the extent of two-thirds of the national territory and lost as much of her population; revolutions ravaged the country already darkened with confusion and chaos. But there was one advantage hidden in these national disasters: they roused the country from its lethargy and brought about a renaissance of the national spirit, reviving its natural expressions, the extinction of which would have meant an irreparable loss to Hungary and to the world.

With the clearing up of the internal situation the spontaneous national reaction was immediate and universal, but at first unorganized and inarticulate. It is most fortunate that it found its natural expression in the form of the Pearly Bouquet, its leader in the incomparable Béla Paulini, and its understanding patron in the Administration and the public of the City of Budapest.

Today it may rightfully be said that the success of the Pearly Bouquet is a symbolic victory of the Hungarian folk-soul over technocracy, a victory of the understanding Hungarian peasant intelligence which realized that it is possible, useful, and enjoyable to profit by the advantages of our mechanical civilization and to remain at the same time one's own self true to the traditions of the Hungarian folk-soul. It is a most significant phenomen for which its creator Paulini coined the expressive phrase that "on weekdays they are for the West, and on their holidays for the East", with all the material and intellectual implications of the words.

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186 The whole movement turned out to be a successful move against the enveloping tide of grey uniformity; a peaceful fight fought with the blessed weapons of idealism in which the pendulum of time miraculously swung back in progressive cultural traditionalism.

186 545 For the true understanding of the Pearly Bouquet it is sufficient to see any one of its performances, any single flower of the Pearly Bouquet, its petals humid with the crystal-dew of country morns, to listen to the performers' speech and to hear their songs alive with the vibrating soul of the medieval forest.

The scene unfolds before the spectator like an eclosion. To the rhythmic throbs of their heavy shepherd canes the minstrels tell their vivid tales, in captivating freshness we see the sequence of miniature dramas in the charming simplicity of which the soul of the peasant life declares itself in details full of meaning and sincerity: the quaint rituals of the bride-wooing and of peasant weddings, the celebration of the harvest, symbolic thanksgiving among the waves of golden wheat, and the vintage festivals with the golden flow of the new wine on the volcanic slopes of Tokay. Then to the passionate strains of Hungarian gypsy music we see the mystic midsummer-night's dance of the maidens round St. Ivan's fire, then the whirling Hungarian dances in all their exquisite variety, first slow, and stately, then quick and frenzied, to be followed by the undulating double step and the gaiety of the dipping and the skipping dance.

From the reverberating cymbalom, a tightly-wired square table, the gypsy brings out the contagious melancholy and the irresistible, wild gaiety of Hungarian folk-songs with his soft padded hammers moving with the speed of lightning. The clear ringing tárogató fills the air with the atmosphere of camp fires surrounded

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by tired warriors with their dreamy longing for their girls and their families. Then the caressing sweet melodies of the violins spread their enchantment or stir the revolving dancers to rapturous hilarity, interrupted suddenly by the thrilling solo dances of the men, amazing in the robust vigour, the proud dignity, and the graceful ease of their performance. They are followed by the coquettish cushion and bottle dances of the girls, the mischievous circling of the cap dance, a multitude of recruiting dances, and by the strenuous exercise of the hook dance of the herdsmen.

The setting is changing all the time, and where we have just witnessed the revels of the cowboys we now enjoy the frolics of the spinnery enveloped with magic and the cheerful fantasy of bright-coloured folk-attire.

Every performance of the Pearly Bouquet, whether the national reunion on St. Stephen's Day or the modest celebration of a minor local chapter, is a national festival, the most distinctive of all Hungarian festivals. It is a celebration always colourful, artistic, and festive, but never tedious, exaggerated, or artificial; for while it glorifies in the simple ways of peasant folk the most beautiful, the most spiritual, the very best in Hungarian folk-art, it never pretends to be more than symbolic testimony to the fact that Hungarian Sundays do exist and have their distinctive atmosphere, just as toilsome Hungarian weekdays have their own. It recognizes and affirms that ideals, dreams, and aspirations have a real existence with all their consequences just as material realities have. The Pearly Bouquet is the festive, solemn expression of this thought, and not a fight against modernity or against the achievements of technocracy. The Hungarian peasant of today will be only too glad to use

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184 545 the steel plough drawn by the tractor and fill the furrow with synthetic fertilizers to make the earth pay richer returns on his sweat and labour, but he does not tolerate the coercion of the machine age, and wishes to know that his soul is free of the iron harness of uniformity.

The Pearly Bouquet is the focal point at which the expression of this thought appears in its convincing fulness, an image in which the humble realities of Hungarian peasant life are transposed to the sphere of absolute art.

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DANCING

The Hungarian nation is one which likes expressing, 535
and knows how to express, its emotions. To do so it uses the interwoven trinity of word, music, and movement: that is, its language, its music, and its dances. It is a trinity which is one and the same thing looked at from a different angle, embodied in a different form. How original and how authentic are Hungarian dances we can conjecture and determine only from the knowledge of its language, which, in spite of the thousand-fold influences of as many years, remained at its base, essentially the same in construction and vocabulary, and of its truly native music, which retained the original flavour of its characteristic qualities, its flexions marked now by typical sombreness, now by irresistible fire and inimitable humour. Through this music there flows an electrifying, typically Hungarian rhythm, a rhythm electrifying in its way both in the slow and in the fast parts, as if it were possible to have slow and fast lightning.

Considering that the songs are the words turned into melody and the dances nothing else but the rhythm of the songs turned into movement, we cannot fail to come to the conclusion that the Hungarian folk-dance of today is, and can be nothing else but, the direct descendant, the immediate and authentic continuation of that of the past.

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535 The Hungarian dance is actually and literally the embodiment, the physical expression of the Hungarian rhythm. Of old, most Hungarian folk-songs and practically all the Hungarian dance-songs have been in double measure composed in $^4/_8$ or $^2/_4$ time. In the oldest relics of Hungarian dance-music and in the Hungarian dance-music of more recent origin, this is the common mesasure ; and the rhythm of the Hungarian dance is perfectly in step with this measure. It is a fact that nothing else but the Hungarian folk-dance, with its basic one or two steps, can be danced to the tune of the Hungarian dance-songs, nothing else but real Hungarian music can produce the Hungarian rhythm, and nothing else but this rhythm can produce the Hungarian dance which is the immediate translation of the former into action.

No doubt in the course of eleven centuries the Hungarian dance acquired new elements as well as the Hungarian language and music ; but if it did so, it assimilated them so thoroughly as to make them well-nigh imperceptible. There are a great number of Hungarian showy dances in which the foreign origin and influence is clearly discernible, but not a single one of these is called or danced as *the Hungarian dance.* The real Hungarian dance is one ; its original sub-varieties are called in the popular language simply the Hungarian slow, ornamental, fresh, or fast dance, the Hungarian pair-dance or couple-dance, the Hungarian men's dance, and so on. One or two other dances, as the Kállay double-dance, the recruiting-dance, and some variations of the latter, as, for instance, the single men's dance and the Transylvanian barn-dance, are in fact nothing else but the original Hungarian folk-dance shaped through the long repetition of a particular practice (recruiting)

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535 or custom (co-operative activities, barn-building, harvesting, etc.).[1]

Slow or fast, stately or furious, merry or sad, it is the instinctive and immediate translation of the Hungarian rhythm into the Hungarian folk-dance by the dancing individual. The steps are not strictly defined; the speed of the music is varying, but the rhythm is always the same. It is a rather difficult, complicated, and, in the lively parts, quite strenuous dance in which no two steps, no two movements are entirely alike. One has to be a Hungarian and an accomplished dancer to do it well, and it is well performed only when it gives the impression of absolute ease. That the best dancers are those who apparently dance with no effort holds more than good. The infinite variety of the Hungarian folk-dance makes people sometimes say that the Hungarian dance is indefinable. This is true to a certain, but only to a certain extent. If the choreography of the Hungarian dance cannot be put on paper easily, it certainly can be described closely and characterized properly.

Before going into a more detailed description of the subject we should like to mention that although when we talk of Hungarian dances we have in mind the Hungarian dance as it is danced today, as a living reality, we have attempted to place it always in its historic background. As a preliminary we also wish to

[1] "In the Pearly Bouquet, there were many people from many villages, and there were as many songs and as many dances as there were villages. To me it was as though they were all the same. I have got the feeling that I have already heard all those melodies, and that I have seen all those dances..." said Dömötör, old shepherd of Váralja, who never in his seventy years went beyond the pastures of his native village, until the day he took part in a performance of the Pearly Bouquet in Budapest.
[See category 116, pages 9-13, and 19-20--Analyst]

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535 mention that the Hungarian folk-dance has three succeeding phases distinctive in the flow of movements and in the speed of the identical rhythm. The first is the introduction, called the "slow"; the second, a sub-phase of this, is the development, the somewhat faster "varied", "complicated", or "ornamental"; the dance reaches its climax in the third movement, the "fresh" or "fast". The three parts are marked not only by varying tempi but also by diversity of movement. We can characterize this best perhaps by the names of the dance-steps in the various movements.

In the first movement, or the "slow", the dancer glides about smoothly and gracefully. In the second movement the dancer varies and complicates or ornaments the dance; he does it more forcefully and somewhat livelier than in the first movement, and that is why the Hungarian language says that he "puts" the dance. This movement finally grows faster and faster and more and more elaborate as it reaches the "fresh" movement, which is the climax. The speed, the fire, and the variety of the dance culminate in a furious but nevertheless dignified paroxysm, of which the sudden whirls, convulsions, the rhythmical dance-words — "rhythms" — and the endless flow of different motives are still marked by a sort of wild and lofty dignity. In fact, the men's part in the Hungarian dance is a vivid picture of the "he-man" who feels, acts, and enjoys himself without restraint of any sort, except dignity.

The Hungarian folk-dance is in its origin a man's dance *par excellence*, the dance of the proud horsemen, of always warring mounted soldiers accustomed to the fact that their might and superiority are respected. It is essentially a man's dance, composed mostly of men's solo dances even when danced by couples. The woman's

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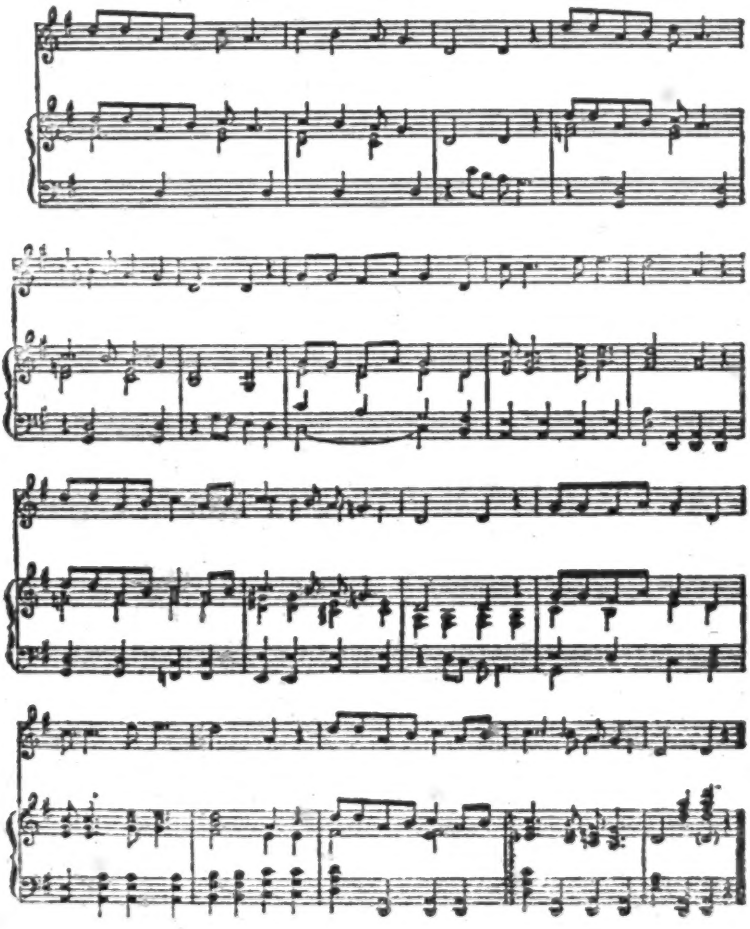
IN FRONT OF MY HOUSE THERE IS A GATE . . .

(Hungarian folkdance ; slow)

Lento **Arranged by Lajos Bárdos** 533



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THE "ORNAMENTED"

Photo Magyar Filmiroda

[facing p 26]

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role is actually secondary; her steps are more simple, with toned-down variations, as if the woman's dance were only a reflex, the unessential accompaniment of the man's dance. Even today, the "slow" and the "ornamental" are still a man's solo dance; the "fresh" or "fast" is nearly always a couple-dance, but even in this last movement it often happens that suddenly the man relinquishes his partner to dance solo for a while, only to resume the pair-dance just as suddenly.

The Hungarian folk-dance music of today represents the technical refinement of primitive elemental rhythms expressive of the urge for the unfettered, a feeling inherited direct from their ancestors. The dancing it has inspired is the physical expression of this very same urge. It is most significant that in spite of the unavoidable influence and changes of a millennium, in spite of the growing speed and confusion of the modern age, the spirit of the Hungarian dance, as the Hungarian folk-spirit in general, has remained very much the same.

We do not attempt, nor do we intend, to give a technical choreographical description of the Hungarian folk-dance. Our purpose is to create in the mind of the reader a vision as plastic and as close to the impression of the spectator as possible by the minute description of the dance.

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The Hungarian dancer does not begin his dance immediately at the first strains of the music. Even in the regulated round dances the first few measures only help him "to get his rhythm". At the sound of the music the dancer straightens himself and takes up a proud, stalwart posture which he keeps until the end of the dance. Nothing can express better his feeling of freedom from all restraint than this posture full of ease and dignity.

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Then, during the first part of the introductory "slow", 535
he balances himself gracefully on the tips of his toes, touching the floor lightly with his heels and swinging his body lightly from the waist to right and left. All this is done on the flexible tiptoe rather than on the sole, the heel itself seldom touching the ground. The hands of the man, when he does not use them for gesticulation, are usually kept behind his back; in the pair-dance either the right hand or both hands of the woman are on the shoulder of the man, but when she accompanies the man's solo, or during the movements which she performs alone, she keeps her hands on her hips.

After the first few lines of the song the dancers start moving with characteristic undulating steps; right and left, forward and backward, now and then stamping the ground energetically and clicking their spurs or the iron hoofs of their high boots rhythmically ("ankling").

This simple balancing step is then ornamented; that is, the simple step of the first leg is followed by a variation performed by the second. The ornamentation consists of lightly touching the ground first with the heel, then with the toe, sometimes with both during the corresponding measure of the music. The tune continues to grow livelier and to be interspersed with rhythmic variations. As soon as it reaches the necessary speed the steps of the dancer become fast and he makes sharp little leaps in various directions. During these hops the dancer "throws his legs"; that is, for every right hop the left leg, and for every left the right leg, performs fast rhythmic movements. All these hops, however, are in symmetrical pairs. From time to time the dancer makes a sudden whirl-like full turn, snaps his fingers, claps his hands, slaps his arms and thighs or, more often, his high boots, and accompanied by rhythmically pronounced shouts,

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stamps the ground with his heels. The body continues to sway lightly and the arms become free: they follow the movements or sway in a rhythmic undulation up and down. Once in a while the dancer reaches to his cap and pulls it forward or pushes it back.

Up to this point the man usually performs the dance solo, but even should he dance with a partner, during the leaps of the "ornamental" he would release her in order to perform alone the figurations of his dance.

The "slow" and the "ornamental" are always followed by the "fast" or "fresh", which is a pair-dance. Sometimes it happens that the partners are ordered into couples by the leader, or, as he is called, the "divider of the dance", but more often the men select their partners directly. This they mostly do by a simple wink or with an inviting but very slight and often well-nigh imperceptible movement of the hand. Quite often the man just reaches out suddenly and, with a quick, energetic movement, grasps the waist of the girl of his choice and carries her off to the dance. They are dancing face to face. With her best kerchief in one hand the girl places one or both of her hands on the shoulders of her partner. The latter holds her waist mostly with one hand only and always with respectful tenderness. After dancing the pair-dance for a while the man resumes the hopping, those sudden small jumps on tiptoe during which he holds his body stiff and erect: he "sharpens" his steps. Now he swings it, lifting and swaying his body from the waist up, right and left. This "mincing" or "sharpening" is simple, or it can be ornamented with the scissor-like movements of the feet. The girl partner makes these steps in complete symmetry, but with more restraint and with fewer variations; she looks up to the man, and her synchronized movements are as if they reflected those

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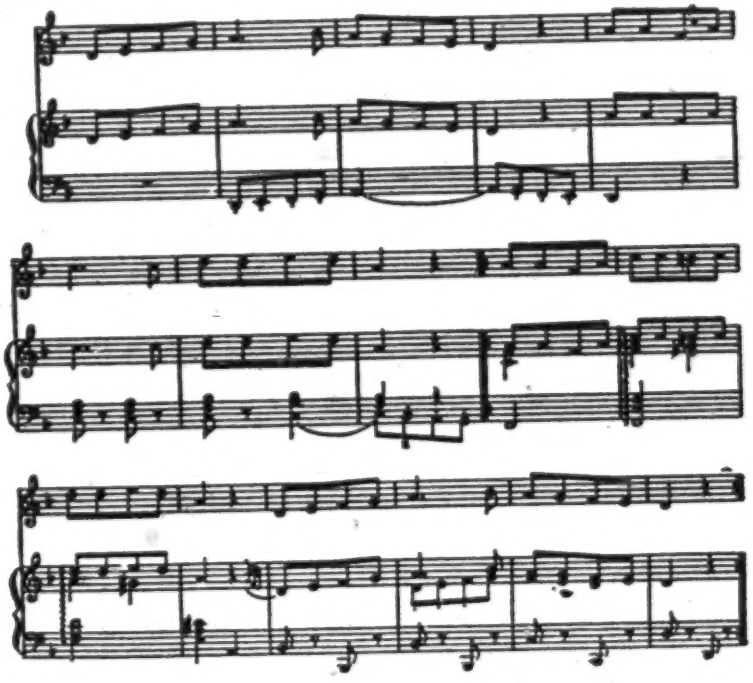
GIRLS OF SZAKMÁR HOW PRETTY YOU ARE ... 533

(Hungarian dance ; ornamented)

Allegro moderato **Arranged by Lajos Bárdos**



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535 of her partner, their dance is bound together by the rhythm, but the girl's dance is only a toned down accompaniment to that of the man. After a while they reunite and swing, sway, turn, and whirl together.

Suddenly the man releases his partner altogether and takes up the ornamental variations of a solo. He balances his hands and arms, then slaps his thighs or the tops of his boots together. Sometimes he bends forward and touches the fronts of his boots, only to straighten himself up in a single proud movement, keeping his head defiantly up, bending it down or tossing it back violently. Again he gets hold of his partner and "skips and dips and dives" her, their knees flexing and rebounding like springs. Then he whirls her round clockwise and back. Suddenly the girl slips out of his arm and glides about gracefully as if inviting him in a coquettish flight. Now she "minces" it on a plate — that is, she turns in a small circle — and just when the dancer is about to regain his hold, she slips away again, enticing him to a renewed pursuit. Finally she surrenders, and the man, radiant with victory, whirls her around. This, and sometimes a peculiar "running around" in which the man turns round the woman who is herself turning, holding her outstretched hand, mark the end of the dance.

The Hungarian folk-dance is a triumph of rhythm which is omnipresent in the music, in the movement. It is enhanced and accentuated by the clicking of spurs and heels, snapping of fingers and clapping of hands, and, above all, by the peculiar rhythmic calls of the man known as *rigmus*, which is a corruption of the Latin *ritmus*, meaning rhythm. Of these sprightly little sentences some are widely used, others are invented by the dancer at the appropriate moment. They are called out with gusto and rhythm, thereby lending stress to the pulsation

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of the music. It is amusing to hear most of them, and they reflect very favourably upon the Hungarian peasant dancer. These rhythmic dance-words usually have sense, somethimes direct and very appropriate sense; they again may be simply euphonic combinations of words. 535

Through a few examples we shall attempt to render the flavour of this colourful feature of the Hungarian dance.

When he is contented and happy with the partner of his choice the man would say something like this :

Neither too big, nor too small,
Sweet little thing, for you I fall.

You are sweet and you are clever,
I want to keep you mine for ever.

Your little waist-line is so slender
To embrace it my arms I tender.

When disappointed by the chosen or the given partner, he does not hesitate to say so :

She is dry and she is old,
Oh, why have I not been told?

Throughout the dance he encourages and spurs himself and his partner to do the dance as he feels it should be done:

Dip it, hop it, speed that twirl,
Until all petticoats whirl.

I wish you would lose your leg
If you don't speed up that step.

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535 In this dance there are no borders,
From nobody take I orders.

The importance of these dance-words is reflected in the popular sentence which maintains that "without the words a dance is not a dance". Truly enough, by the judicious selection and proper ordering of the dance-words, it would be possible to reconstruct the whole Hungarian folk-dance phase by phase, step by step.

The introductory "slow", the "ornamental" development, and the concluding "fast", the men's solos and the role of the partners in the couple-dance, the proud posture and the leading role of the man, the secondary but extremely lovely role of the woman, the Hungarian dance-step, now in its gracefully balanced floating, now in its skipping, tapping, diving, and its romping hops, the play of the arms and hands, the clicking of spurs and heels, the whirling turns, and finally the dance-words — all make the Hungarian folk-dance something as unique, as typical and artistic, and as highly developed as are the two other natural expressions of the Hungarian folk-spirit: the Hungarian tongue and Hungarian music.

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[175] The Hungarians conquered their land in 896 A. D., and for nearly a century they continued raiding a frightened Europe from Spain to the Baltic. In the chronicle of St. Gallen, written by Brother Eckehard in 926, we find the first known record about Hungarian dancing. A raiding party of Hungarians had fallen upon the Abbey of St. Gallen, and to placate them the frightened monks offered them the choice of their treasury or their equally treasured wine-cellars. The raiders chose the second, whereupon "they started a jolly, good merry dance before their leaders", according to the chronicle.

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The next mention of Hungarian dancing we find in the 535
minutes of the Synod of Buda held in 1279. This passage directs the pastors to stop the practice of dancing in the church or in the churchyard, a custom which outlived the order and is found in a mitigated form even today in a few Hungarian regions. The next reference is found in [175]
the famous Illuminated Chronicle of Vienna (1348), a valuable source of early Hungarian history. It states that in celebration of the victory of the allied forces of Rudolf of Habsburg and Ladislas IV of Hungary over Ottokar II, King of Bohemia, in 1278, Ladislas proclaimed a national holiday on which nothing else was to be done but dancing . . .

With the strengthening of Western Christianity and the puritan ideals of the Reformation we find a great many references to dancing, mostly in the form of ecclesiastical admonitions to the people.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, a preacher blames the girls of the age for being much too industrious in the dance. Another of these admonitions refers to the "dance of the Black Army", *i. e.*, the famous army of mercenaries of King Mathias, constituted in the 1450's, which was perhaps the first regular standing army of Europe. In 1526, during the tragic battle of Mohács, which led to the prolonged invasion of Hungary by the Turks, one of the roused Hungarian noblemen blames the loss of the country on the "damned dancing king, who has lost his life in the headlong flight". In 1552 a churchman complains that the youth spent its time dancing in the spinnery "sometimes as late as midnight" (something to surprise the parents of modern girls); another in 1582 calls dancing one of the gravest Hungarian sins, and a hundred years later a preacher terms dancing the chief pest of the age. All through

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535 the seventeenth century such admonitions are legion. From these we know that in her exuberance one lady danced herself to death, that the young folk could never dance enough, and that in this respect the old were "just as bad" as the young. We read that those who could not lift their legs because of age "tried to do the dance with their fingers on the table". Most of these admonitions are addressed to the common peasant folk, but in many instances the nobility was not spared either.

That this attitude could not possibly have been universal is well illustrated by the meditation about dancing on earth and in Heaven by a pious Dominican nun put down at the beginning of the sixteenth century. She asked and answered the question of what is necessary for a good dance. "A nice, roomy, clear, and clean place; peace, good food, and plenty to drink; a beautiful, strong, flexible, and graceful body" — and the like she found. "As all these things will be plentiful in Heaven, it is clear that there will be dancing, too." She adds that "music will be made by the lyra, the violin, the cymbalum, and the drum, and the words of the dance will be told also..."

Two hundred years later a famous preacher of his time, addressing his congregation, proved with his quotations from the Scriptures that there would be dancing in Heaven. Therefrom he concluded that this was one more reason for longing for Heaven and for considering this earthly life nothing but a dancing-school!

Both these admonitions and encouragements throw a vivid light on the important role of dancing in the lives of the common folk. As we can see, it was one of the most universal means for the expression of their emotions. Then, as now, there were no events of importance,

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gay or sad, which were not celebrated with music, singing 535
and dancing: celebrations which we regard as essentially social functions, as well as the universal form of popular rejoicing from childbirth through courtship and marriage to death. We find them dancing before going to war, recruiting, at the conclusion of peace, at various semi-private and communal activities; and on every other conceivable occasion, of which harvest, vintage, corn-husking, sale of the crop, of wine, or of animals, the killing of the pig, and spinning, and village fairs and *kermesses* are only the most typical examples. There are also the various forms of voluntary co-operative help, such as building a fellow villager's house or barn, the termination of which is as good a reason as any for celebrating.[1]

Naturally, dancing as a spontaneous and primitive expression of emotion plays a more important role in the life of the primitive folk than in the life of the higher social classes, but just as primitive culture is at the source of more developed ones, so folk-dances are nearly always the basis of the more refined and more sophisticated dances of the higher circles. Until well into the sixteenth century Hungary was a national kingdom, and even from then on until the end of the seventeenth century the Viennese court life of its Habsburg kings remained without much influence upon the life of Hungarian nobility.

Only after the liberation of Buda and the rest of the country from the Turks at the end of the seventeenth

[1] There is nothing new under the sun, and those who think that the barn-dance is a genuine American invention are only partly right. The ancestral custom of barn-dancing in Hungarian Transylvania after the community gave a hand to one of its members in need precedes its American counterpart by a thousand years.

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535 and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries were the Hungarian aristocrats — many of whom were newly settled and richly endowed foreigners — gradually attracted to the Royal and Imperial Court of Vienna. Throughout history, and even today, the landed Hungarian nobleman spends his life on his estate among the peasantry, and their lives are bound together by the same national feeling and the same material interests. We have a great many recordings in various sources of the fact that the Hungarian noblemen often took part in the celebrations of the common folk, and even *vice versa*. Our sources disclose that they participated in each other's dances with natural ease. We can see from this that not only throughout Hungarian history, but even in the various social strata of Hungarian society, the Hungarian dance has always been essentially the same. Few nations of Europe have had as restless a history as Hungary so it is all the more surprising that its original institutions have been kept and developed up to our days in such a straight line.

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We have described the Hungarian folk-dance closely and dealt at length with its origin, its spirit, and its identity. What has been said above throws some light upon the sentimental and psychological role of dancing in Hungarian history. Let us now look further into the various phases of its role in Hungary's national existence and attempt to trace its physical development.

[181] We know that the Hungarians were a race of warriors, horsemen from among the best; proud, impulsive, gay, and human. These characteristics are always apparent in the original Hungarian dances, even today, when horseback riding is not so universal as it used to be, and in

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spite of the fact that for the last century Hungary has known a relatively peaceful period disrupted only by the disaster of the Great War. But today as yesterday, the Hungarian peasant makes the best and smartest Hussar in the world. By enlisting in the cavalry the Hungarian returns to his natural element, to which his being reacts in the same way as it reacts to the rhythm of the Hungarian word or of Hungarian music.

We mentioned above the dance of Hungarian raiders at St. Gallen in 926, and we quoted the medieval preacher's remarks about the dances in the spinnery which, in his words, were the dances of the Black Army. The Black Army, set up in 1459, consisted of two parts; the Czech and Serbian mercenaries, who composed the regiments of foot-soldiers, and more than double the number of light Hungarian cavalry organized on the model of the old Hungarian cavalry. Until its dispersion and disintegration after King Mathias' death, the Black Army was one of the greatest regular armies of all times. Its Hungarian cavalry was the forebear and model of all Hussar regiments in the world up to our days, in organization, outfit, and appearance. As recently as the Napoleonic Wars the Hussar regiments of foreign countries were largely composed of Hungarians. The famous French Hussars of Louis XIII, Richelieu, and Villars, those of the Prussian Ziethen and of Maria Theresa were composed nearly exclusively of Hungarians. After Rákóczi was defeated by the Habsburgs in his war of liberty, one of his lieutenants, Bercsényi, emigrated to France to become Commander of the Guard of Louis XIV. Bercsényi organized Louis XIV's famous Hungarian Hussars and was given the utmost military honour — that of Maréchal de France. Many Hungarian Hussars went to the United States with Lafayette, Rochambeau, and Lauzun

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and took a prominent part in the liberation of America. Of these, Colonel Kovács and Captain Poleretzky were the most prominent. The Hussars of Victor Emanuel and of Garibaldi were mostly Hungarians, and about 1840, Hungarian cavalry officers visiting England were amazed to find that the organization and equipment of British Hussars were exactly the same as that of their early Hungarian models.

Parallel with the Hungarian Hussars developed the history of the Hungarian foot-soldier, which from the fifteenth to the early eighteenth century, unlike the regularly organized Hungarian cavalry, consisted preponderantly of foreign mercenary elements. It is useful to take good note of these facts because they are necessary for the proper understanding of Hungarian folk-dancing. From the fifteenth to the early eighteenth century the foot-soldiers in the Hungarian armies were mostly mercenaries recruited from rootless Slav elements. Naturally this must have shown in their celebrations and dances, which had many Slav characteristics. The foot-soldiers' dance which developed and flourished in this period was known in Hungary and abroad as the Hajdu or Hayduck dance, from the collective name of cattle-drovers, among whom there were many Slavs, and whose role and number in the Hungarian foot-regiments were important. This dance flourished only as long as the mercenary foot-regiments existed. With their discontinuation it soon fell into oblivion.

Not so the dances of the mounted soldiers. The idea of the Hussar and the idea of the Hungarian horseman are, so to say, synonymous. As the Hussar is the direct continuation of the mounted Hungarian soldier, so the Hungarian folk-dance is the natural product of the Hungarian horsemen's celebration, a direct descendant of

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the ancestral horsemen's dance, which has become an organic element of Hungarian national life. The Hungarian dancer dances in an erect, proudly dignified, and even defiant posture. As told, the foot soldiers of the medieval Hungarian armies danced differently, and their dance had many foreign features, such as the squatting, characteristic of the Slav tribes surrounding Hungary who lived and fought on foot. It was only natural that with the dissolution of the mercenary foot-regiments the practice and the memory of their dances were soon forgotten. The only surviving trace of their dance is found today in the dance of the pig-herders and sometimes shepherds of a few regions, herders and shepherds who, in contrast to the Hungarian cowboy and horse-herder, do not ride and were never enrolled as Hussars.

The Hussar is the natural product of the Hungarian race and its ways of life. Nobody else but the Hungarian lads were ever considered good enough to make Hussars in Hungary, and, as we have seen, even abroad. Recruiting ordinances and conventions from the early sixteenth century specify that none but Hungarians may be recruited for Hussars, and a Hungarian newspaper article of 1789 states that "the Austrian Emperor's recruiters are beating the land, but *no Slovaks, no Germans, and no redheads will be accepted* . . ." The famous Hungarian Hussar general and poet, Count Gvadányi, in a poem from 1793, puts the following illuminating words into a recruiting sergeant's mouth: "Say, Lieutenant! Look at that lad! He is a Hungarian, and that is why he is worth a lot of newcomers! His place is among us, and we will sign him up at once!" The "newcomers" were Slovak, German, Serbian, and Roumanian immigrants, who came to Hungary first in their flight before the Turk or after the withdrawal of the Turk to replace the Hun-

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535 garian population so terribly devastated during two
702 centuries of continuous warfare.

The whole institution of recruiting was based on the Hungarian folk-dance — partly because of the universally known and proved fact that a good dancer made a good horseman and thus a good Hussar, but also because the recruiters, who were shrewd practical psychologists, knew that the dance-loving Hungarian lads would be unable to resist the lure of Hungarian music and the enticement of the dance. They knew that the enchanted lads would sign up sooner in the self-intoxicated state of the dance than under any other form of persuasion. So recruiting always appeared in the form of a brilliant little military pageant with a gay itinerant celebration carrying an appeal to instinct and imagination, which Hungarian youth could not resist. It was built upon the Hungarian folk-dance, which stirred the senses of the most desirable recruit, that of the enterprising and light-hearted Hungarian peasant lad who loved to dance and knew how to do it.

The coming of the recruiters was a thrilling event The recruiting gang, a group of stalwart young Hussars clad in brilliant new uniforms, with spurs clicking on their shiny high boots, were smart to the utmost according to all standards. The rattling of heavy cavalry sabres, the rhythmic swing of sabretaches, the sway of snow-white heron egrets on scarlet shakos, and the haughty, light-hearted demeanour of the recruiters formed a sight which thrilled the imagination.

What recruiting really meant is clearly reflected in the literature full of colour and life of the period. One of the foremost Hungarian poets of the time, Joseph Gvadányi, was a Hussar general, in his youth a popular recruiting officer; another, G. Czuczor, was son of a famous recruiting corporal, himself an excellent dancer.

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Their poetic descriptions of the recruiting dance are so vivid, so detailed, and so accurate that their reading instantly brings back to life this peculiar Hungarian institution. In Gvadányi's poems we read that at just the right moment the music of the gypsy band struck up, the recruiters took their positions, and when they began to dance the audience was gaping with admiration, beaming with delight. Some of the livelier lads among the onlookers started to click the rhythm with their heels and gradually began to "put" the figurations of the dance. Cleverly the recruiting sergeant approached the best-looking of these lads and, in his glib-tongued way, told the awed youngsters all about the miraculous beauties of Hussar-life. He offered them a drink, pressed a shiny new silver dollar into their hands, surreptitiously put shakos on their heads, and drew them, as if by chance, closer and closer into the dancing-circles. Before they realized it, the lads were signed up, and off they went with the recruiters.

Because it is so illuminating we quote in full Czuczor's more technical description of the recruiting-dance as he saw it done by his father and as he danced it himself at the height of the vogue of professional dancing:

> We are standing in the market place of a small rural community where the peasantry of the environs gather. All at once from behind the picturesque throng, we hear the clear-ringing sound of the tárogató, the excited shouts of the crowd, and floating above the multitude we perceive the swing of colourful egrets. Then, surrounded by the retinue of bustling peasant lads, suddenly appears the recruiting gang. Well in front walks the recruiting sergeant, earnest of mien, stiff and important. He does not hop or click his heels like his men, nor does he sing,

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535 but every one of his steps beats out the rhythm. He
702 swings his cane with the music, and, stepping out with coquettish grace, holds his sabre in such a way that his sabretache strikes his leg at every step. A few steps behind come the recruiters, surrounding the recruiting corporal, whose rank and importance is immediately apparent even if we do not notice his hazel cane or the braiding of his shako. His bearing is officious and haughty. It is as though he were floating forward with his well-marked elastic steps. He is not so composed as the sergeant, but not quite so hilarious as are the common recruiters. His deportment is smart, and his simple, yet expressive movements are closely followed by those under him; he is the master of the dance. The recruiters follow him with a nonchalant but nevertheless smart demeanour. They click their heels, and clap their hands while they beat out their sharp, ornamented steps. They walk round the market-place until the best spot is found, and the sergeant signals to them to stop. They form a circle with the corporal in the middle; then to the tunes played by a uniformed gypsy orchestra the recruiting-dance begins. There are no dance-steps during the first few verses, which only help the men to get the measure by clicking their spurs or by simply walking round the dancing-circle. Then we see a few dance-steps, either conventional ones or some designated by the corporal whom they watch closely, at the same time keeping an eye on their *vis-à-vis* as well. This part of the dance mostly follows in a determined order, and the opening steps are rather simple. If the measure of the song is of eight beats, then two steps are made to the right, one to the left, again two to the right,

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one to the left, concluded by a double step, bringing the dancers back to position.

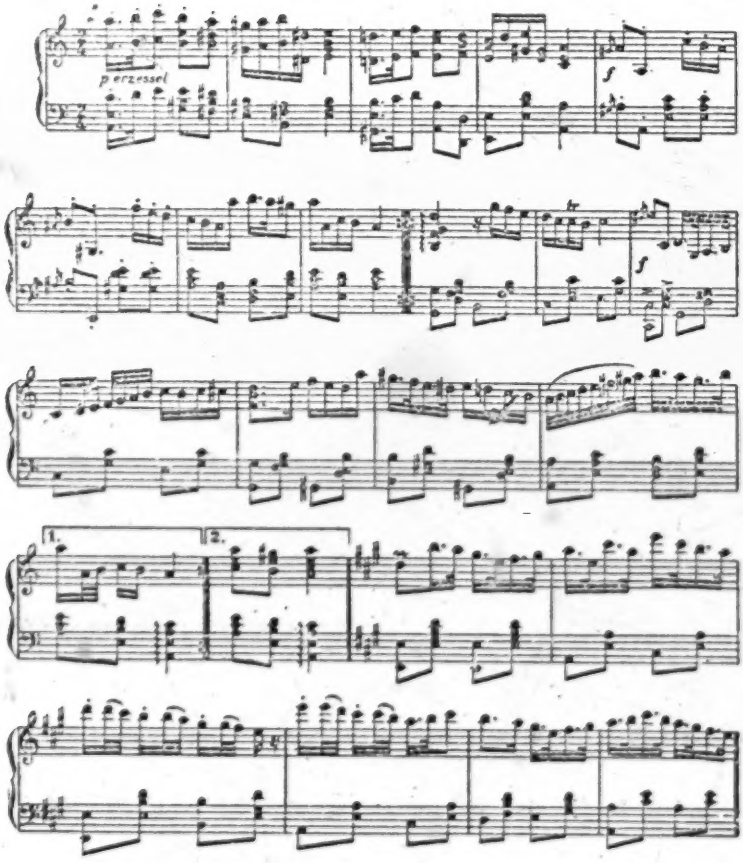
This part is repeated five or six times and is followed by the "ornamental", which is livelier and more impetuous than the preceding part. In the "ornamental", vigorous leaps upward and in all directions are well in order; the accompanying rattle of sabres and the swaying sabretaches help to complete the perfect image of a truly heroic dance. Like the expressions of all violent emotions, the music and the dance calm down to resume their former stateliness and dignity. The whole dance is then repeated in the same sequence two or three times, whereupon the sergeant signals to them to stop, and the gay gang of recruiters moves on.[1]

From these descriptions and from all others we know that the Hungarian recruiting-dance can be visualised vividly. The descriptions themselves, and the fact that any lively peasant lad could dance along with the recruiters — often the best of these joined in a recruiting squad as recruiters on the spot — prove conclusively that the recruiting-dance was nothing else but the somewhat regulated and solemnized group-version of the "slow" and "ornamental" men's dances themselves — that is, the man's part in the Hungarian folk-dance. In keeping with the occasion, it was performed with stress on the spectacular and danced with exceptional grace and dig-

[1] In one of his poems Czuczor describes the beginning of the recruiting dance somewhat differently: "The music is on, let us start; let us click our heels in perfect unison, then make three light jumps to the right, then three to the left, and beat out the rhythm of the music with our spurs." As a matter of fact there were as many variations of the recruiting dance as there were recruiting gangs, although really they were always the same.

BIHARY'S RECRUITING DANCE

533 *Lento* Arranged by Ede Bartay



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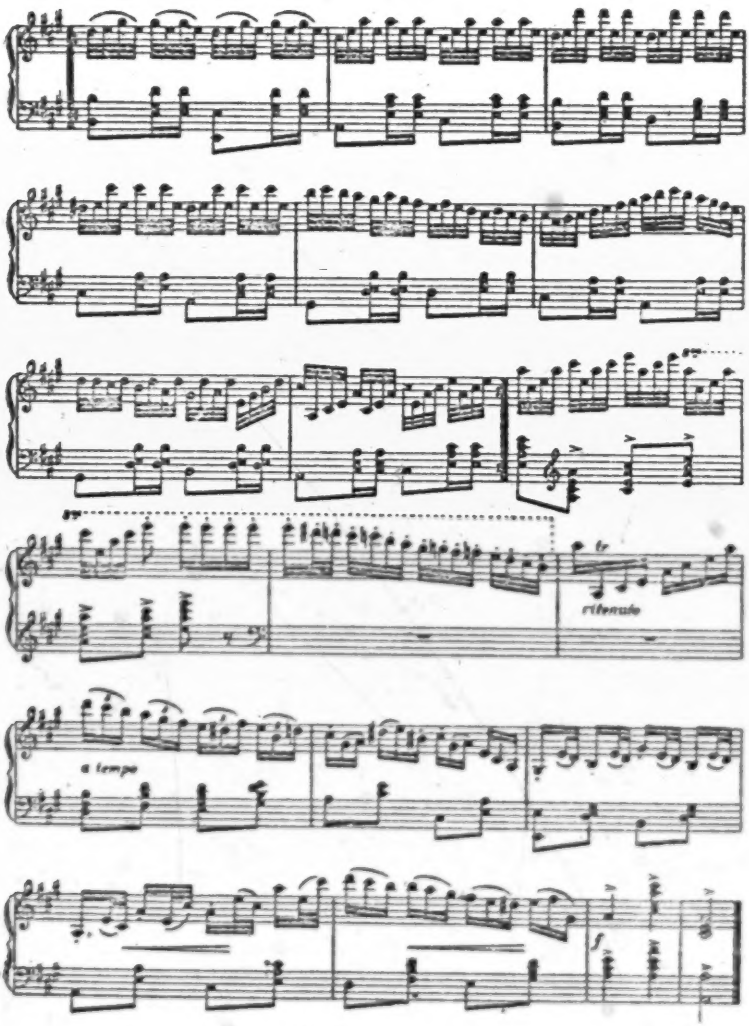

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535 nity, as one could expect from such excellent dancers as
702 the recruiters were.

The recruiting-dance carried its importance and its attraction in the appeal to that craving for importance, that yearning for the unusual which lies hidden in every one. By stirring, intoxicating, and exalting the dancer, it attained its purpose. Today as ever, the good peasant dancer feels, and as a matter of fact is considered by his fellow villagers, superior. The very best dancers only can take part in the recruiting-dance, under the leadership of the outstanding dancer who is known as the recruiting master, wherever it is still done.

The institution of recruiting was discontinued with the introduction of general conscription in Hungary in the second half of the nineteenth century, but the recruiting-dance as a glorified version of the Hungarian folk-dance has survived and is still widely danced in its more or less original form, by the best male dancers, young and old, in various parts of Hungary.

535 The recruiting-dance also survives in a somewhat corrupted local version in the Hungarian regions of Transylvania as part of the *Csürdüngölő*, the barn-dance. There it is often known as the *Legényes*, that is, the single young men's dance. A dance of this name is also done in some parts of the great Hungarian plain, and, like the other, is derived from the original recruiting-dance.

Barn-dancing as such has been an age-old institution in Transylvania. It is a dance by which the village celebrates the completion of a farmhouse or of a barn constructed by the co-operative work of the whole community. The word *Csürdüngölő* means literally stamping of the barnfloor, and any and all dances danced at the celebration may be classed as such. Practically all are some local forms of the Hungarian folk-dance, into which at

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places foreign elements have also found their way. One 535
of the high-lights of barn-dancing is the single young men's dance, which has a pronounced resemblance to the recruiting-dance. The latter, however, was primarily a functional dance composed from the natural elements of the Hungarian folk-dance and featuring particularly its "slow" and "ornamental" parts, whereas the single young men's dance, while it is also a showy dance in which the onlookers delight, is danced chiefly for the enjoyment of the participants themselves. It is a round dance led by the foremost dancers of the place, but the leader does not dance entirely solo, as the recruiting corporal did, but with a partner whose role is that of a competitor. The spectacular beauty and skill with which this dance is performed are often amazing, as the leaders compete with each other, and the rest with their *vis-à-vis*, in an attempt to prove superior to the other in endurance, skill, and the beauty and variety of their dance. It is faster than the dignified recruiting-dance and, true to its communal character it gradually evolves into the general enjoyment of a dance in which couples of the two sexes continue, in accordance with the music, all the different varieties of the Hungarian folk-dance.

The single young men's dance *(Legényes)* of the Hungarian lowlands is somewhat different, inasmuch as the competitive double solo is danced generally by the two best dancers alone. It is nearly always a magnificent exhibition of the Hungarian man's dance. Often it is followed by the local version of the recruiting-dance or by universal dancing in which all present, men and women, take part.

Just as the recruiting-dance developed directly from the natural Hungarian folk-dance, so developed the most beautiful and deservedly most famous of Hungarian

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DOUBLE STEP OF NAGYKÁLLÓ

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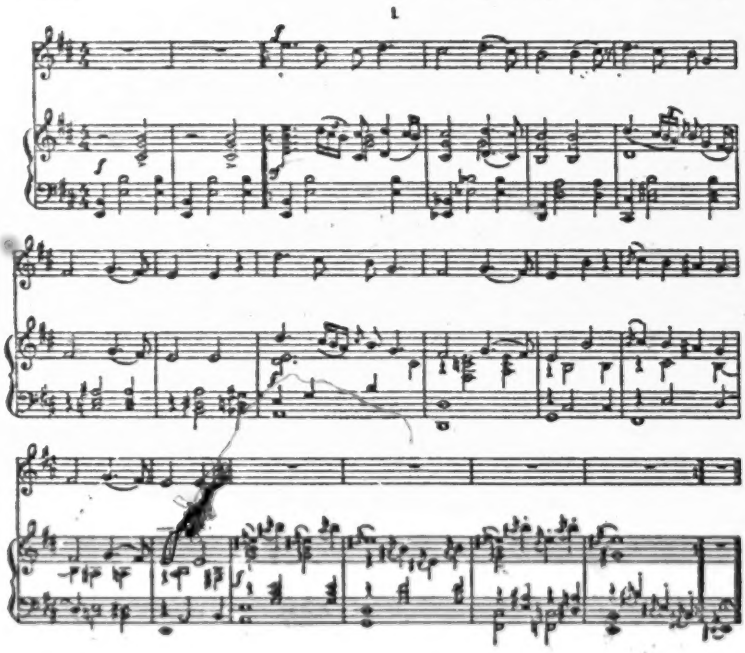
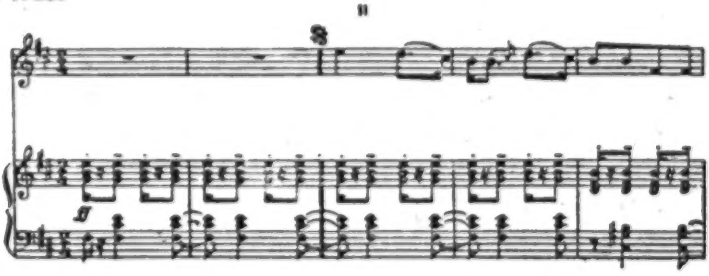
Lento

Arranged by Zoltán Kodály



Vivace



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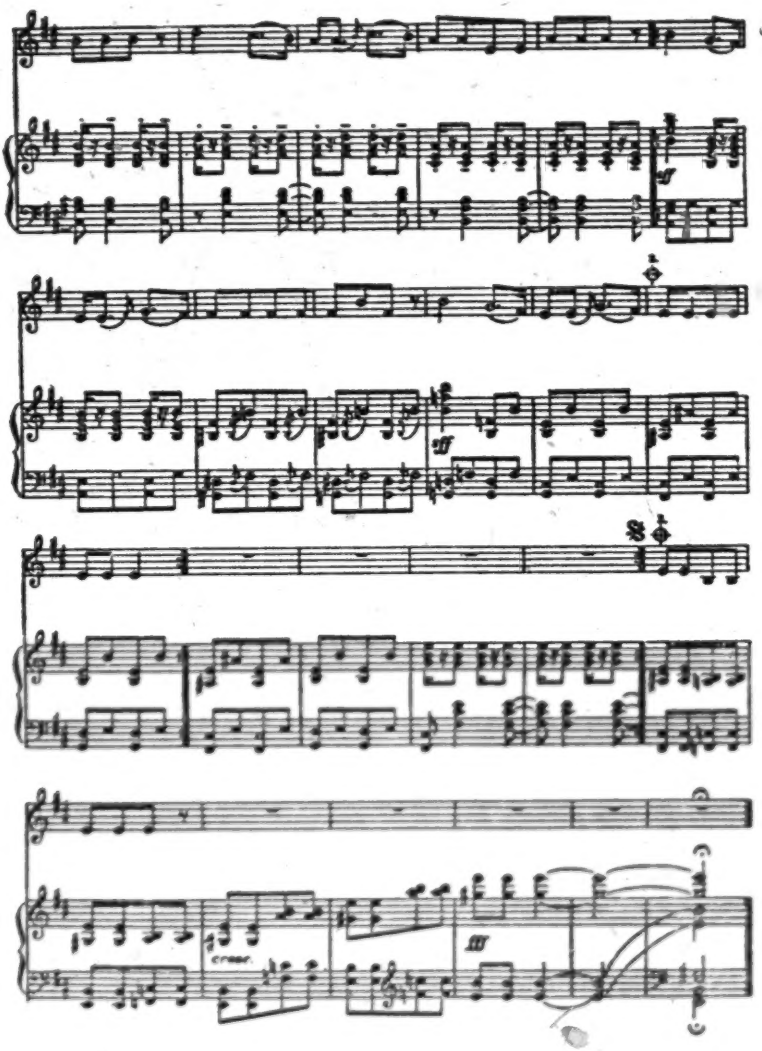

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535 exhibition dances, the showy couple-dance of Kálló *(Kállai-kettős)*. Originally better known as a strenuous individual exhibition of dancing-skill by a couple of outstanding dancers, it finally settled in its present form. The dance takes its name from the town of Nagykálló, always famous for its thriving Hungarian art-industries, the workers of which made up the bulk of its population. We have every reason to think that it originated and developed as the festive dance of the local craftsmen. It bears all the characteristics of the Hungarian folk-dance, but besides the pleasure and satisfaction the performers naturally derive from it, its secondary purpose has always been to please the onlookers. In keeping with its double function it gives the dancers an opportunity to enjoy themselves and to show off their skill in a dance which restrains, regulates, and refines — "spectacularizes" the Hungarian folk-dance. It is, perhaps because it taxes the skill and poise of the dancer to the utmost, a dance restricted to the few even in its place of origin, and there is no doubt that it certainly is one of the most attractive forms of Hungarian folk-dancing.

It is impossible here to deal extensively with the great many incidental, occasional, and game dances, some of which are original. With the flow of time and changing institutions, many have lost their original meaning or role. We wish, however, to say a few words on the "refined" forms of the Hungarian folk-dance encountered in the higher strata of Hungarian society.

Previously we mentioned that the Hungarian folk-dance is essentially the dance of the Hungarian peasantry: a universal natural dance surging from the innate urge of the Hungarian people in an extremely flexible form, which, however, is inseparable from Hungarian music and its characteristic rhythm. It is the festive dance of

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the people, who, during the dance, feel free of the burdens 535
and restraints of everyday life. In the rural districts of the country, it has remained up to our days the common language of celebration with peasant and landed gentry alike, differing only in the degree of dynamism and refinement. Only in more recent times, since modern urbanism entirely separated the different elements of the Hungarian population, have the dance of the Hungarian peasantry and that of the higher (mostly city-dwelling) social strata become radically different. During the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century this separation was speeded up by foreign influences and the swing of fashion towards the mannerisms of the Royal and Imperial Court of Vienna. Not until the wave of nationalistic feeling which developed in the 1830's and 1840's, in the wake of the Germanizing endeavours of the Habsburgs, did the Hungarian folk-dance win again its social rights. But this revived and "refined" Hungarian dance turned out to be something very different from its original model, particularly in the pedantic hands of the foreign ballet-masters of Hungarian aristocrats and in the interpretation of the mostly foreign dancing-masters of urbane citizenry.

The affectations and mannerisms, the exaggerated languor in the "slow" and the altogether overdone speed in the "fast" parts, make it a caricature rather than a refined twin version of the original Hungarian folk-dance. This is also the case with most other Hungarian "dance-compositions", whether adaptations of the original patterns, as for instance the recruiting-dance of the ballroom, or so-called "original creations", of which usually only a fraction survive their first presentations.

Of all the imitation folk-dances, the Csárdás alone became lasting and popular: popular to such an extent

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535 that it became known abroad, and even in the mind of the average Hungarian city-dweller, as the authentic Hungarian national dance, which, however it is not. Among more than sixty names by which the Hungarian peasantry knows its dances, vainly do we try to find the name of Csárdás. Its originators were a group of patriotic Hungarian aristocrats who introduced it into the fashionable balls of the 1840's. While based upon the rhythm and steps of the Hungarian folk-dance and danced to the accompaniment of original or imitation Hungarian folk-tunes, it remains an imitation which falls far short of its original model. Living up to the expectations of its creators, it indeed became a Hungarian national ballroom-dance, but in its "refined" form it has been rather a travesty than a simplified version of the real Hungarian national dance.

Only more recently, with the national rally following the Great War, a rally intensified by the world-wide success of Hungarian folk-music revived by Hungarian composers, did the Csárdás as a Hungarian ballroom-dance, and other Hungarian dance-creations show considerable improvement. The graduates of the newly founded College of Physical Culture, who are now replacing as athletic and dance-directors the old-fashioned "teachers of gymnastics" of another generation, and the splendid, truly Hungarian ballets mounted by the Budapest Opera, have helped to weed out the unaesthetic deformations of imitation Hungarian folk-dances transplanted to the ballroom and to the stage. Still the greatest influence was exerted by the Hungarian peasant-folk itself through the presentations of the Pearly Bouquet, which amazed both the Hungarian public and the mass of foreign visitors from all lands on earth by the dignified mature beauty and the artistic refinement of this most Hungarian of all Hungarian folk-arts: dancing.

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MUSIC

To the foreigner Hungarian music conjures up a 533
picture of men in richly embroidered Hussar uniforms playing languorous Tzigane melodies in gaily lit cafés.

Principally as the result of the work accomplished more recently by a number of ardent Hungarian composers and scholars of music, the widespread misbeliefs concerning Hungarian folk-dancing and folk-music have been gradually revised and thereby cleared up even in the wider public mind. The realization that the so-called "gypsy music" is only a syrup-coated corruption of the underlying original Hungarian melodies has helped greatly in clarifying the matter. The demonstrations of learned Hungarian composers and musicians, and particularly the findings of such outstanding men as Bartók and Kodály, have proved conclusively that the genuine Hungarian folk-music is an essentially different thing from the newer "gypsy" interpretation widely used and immortalized by Franz Liszt and so thoroughly exploited by his imitators. Bartók, Kodály, and others, perhaps in the last minute, unearthed and perpetuated for us an amazing wealth of original folk-music truly Hungarian in its powerful raciness, characteristic flavour, sombre wildness of spirit and humour. This authentic Hungarian music is as different from the over-ornamented and exploited Hungarian "gypsy" tunes as music possibly can be.

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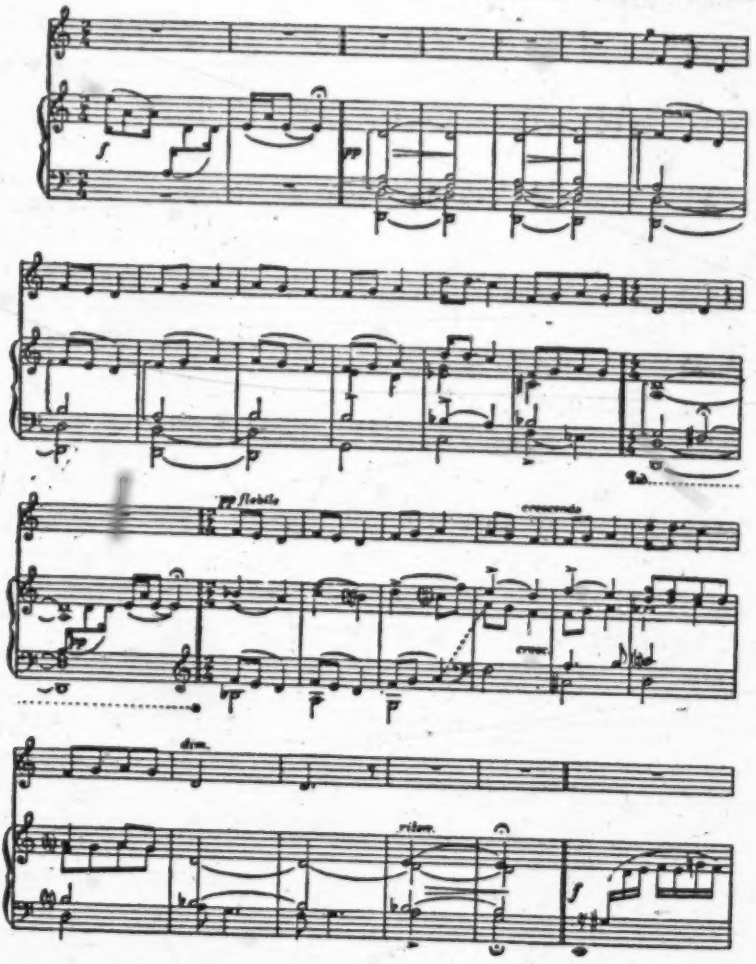
DROUGHT ON THE PASTURES

(Old Hungarian folk-song)

533 *Andante*

Arranged by Jenő Ádám



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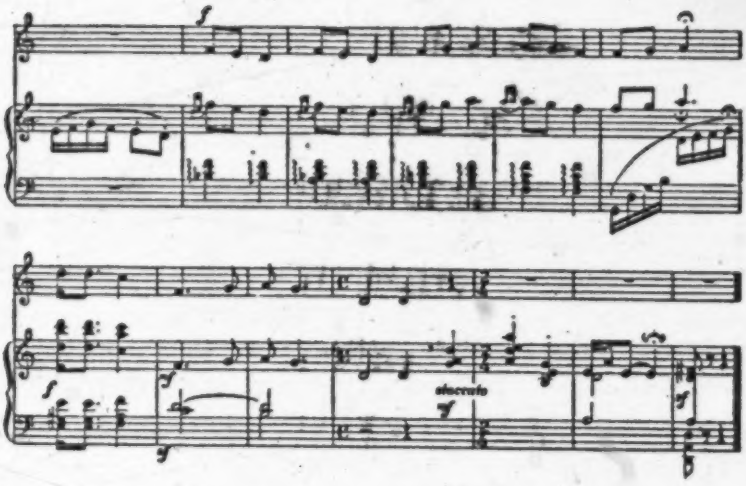

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533 Folk-music in Hungary, as in the rest of Europe, is the collection of melodies and dance-songs of the common rural population. It is the musical heritage of the peasantry, people conservative by nature and by the force of their ancestral occupation. This folk-music and the words of the songs along with the folk-tales and the decorative inclination of the peasantry are the instruments through which the popular fantasy, the individual and collective imagination of a people, finds its expression and its perpetuation. In fact, it is the truest image, the most characteristic revelation of the folk-soul.

True, Hungarian folk-music has a number of characteristic features which have sprung from the same roots. According to these recurring features Hungarian folk-music may be divided into two principal groups of melodies and dance-songs characterized by more or less similar *motifs*, style, and construction, by which their type and the epoch to which they belong can easily be established. These two groups of Hungarian folk-music are the music of older (archaic) origin, and that of more recent origin. The songs belonging to the former class are readily recognized by their peculiarly archaic pentatonic scale, which, as the name implies, is composed of five notes only. These songs are composed of isometric verses in which the four lines are always of the same length and invariably contain the same number of syllables. The music of the words usually varies in all four verses, the first and fourth lines being invariably different. Rhythmically this group may be subdivided into different headings. In the songs belonging to the first — and, incidentally, most interesting group — the rhythm is free ; these are the so-called "parlando" melodies. In the second group the rhythm is of a rigid, dance-like type, while the similarly dance-like punctuated rhythm of the third is adapted

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to the words of the text. All the songs falling into these three categories of the old Hungarian folk-music are closely related not only in any given region but everywhere in Hungary, in the widest sense of the term, including Burgenland, historic Transylvania, and among the late descendants of the Hungarian settlers of distant Moldavia, a fact which may be duly considered as an irrefutable proof of the national unity of the Hungarian race. The relics of this category have been collected principally by Bartók and Kodály. They number more than a thousand songs belonging to some two hundred main varieties. 533

The songs of the second group are of more recent origin, their age averaging about a hundred to a hundred and twenty years. They retain the dance-like, punctuated rhythm of some of the older songs, and their melodies are reminiscent of the archaic pentatonic scale, but they differ in the symmetric musical construction of the first and fourth line and in the variability of the scale they employ. In some of these songs the scale is the usual major, the so-called doric, or aeol; the mixolide we find less often, while the phrygian is very rare. These songs today seem to be at the peak of their popularity; more than 3500, belonging to some 800 varieties, have been recorded.

The rest of the Hungarian folk-songs, numbering about 6000, belong to a variety of sources. Some are adaptations of foreign songs, but the majority are what we could best call "popularized art-songs," melodies which, because of their popular qualities, have been adopted by the rural Hungarian populations in an age in which the easy communications favour such an interchange. Among these latter we find a good number of songs composed in the style of the more recent Hun-

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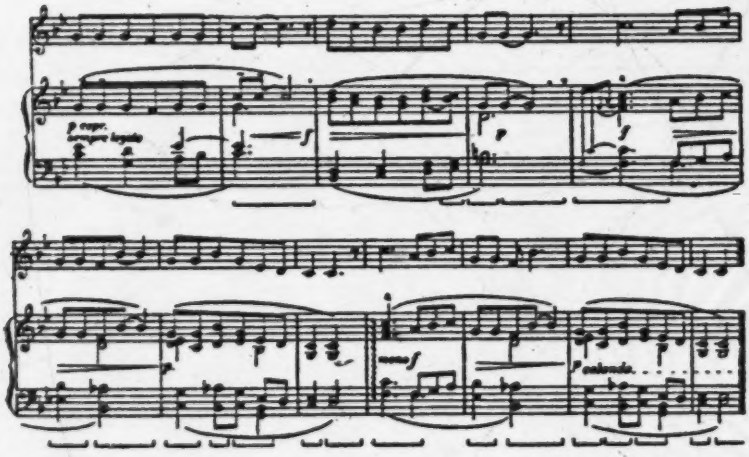
THERE IS A RIVER NEAR DEBRECEN . . .

(Hungarian folk-song)

Andante rubato **Arranged by Béla Bartók**



By courtesy of Rózsavölgyi & Co. Budapest

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garian folk-music. These are the songs which are known 533
abroad in cafe society as "Hungarian" or "gypsy" music.

It is interesting and significant that the songs adopted by the people from these categories are usually the best of an immense production. They often become transmuted into real Hungarian folk-songs on the lips of the Hungarian peasantry, who simplify, clean, and polish the melody with their infallible instinct which springs from their closeness to the earth, and which is hostile to everything that is hybrid or artificial.

The interpretation of Hungarian folk-music as accompaniment of songs, as entertainment, or in the form of dance-music has practically always been the role of a sentimentally cherished but more or less disdained caste of professional musicians. Who acted as musicians to the Hungarians in their ancestral lands or during their migrations towards the Occident is controversial. All we know is that they had, and still have, original names for a number of musical instruments, and that some of these instruments were in use long after their settlement in the Hungary of today. This is sufficient proof to the effect that they already had a degree of musical culture before they settled on the great Central European plain eleven centuries ago. It is a fact that the Hungarian, proud by nature and by the force of circumstances, was never inclined to be a showman or a professional musician. We also know that at the time of their migrations to the European lowlands their musicians were Ukrainian bards, called *igritz*. From the occupation of the Valley of the Danube in 896 until the fifteenth century musical entertainment was supplied to Hungarians by autochtonous Slovene musicians.

At the beginning of the fifteenth century in the foot- 533
steps of the invading Turkish forces appeared the gypsies, 563

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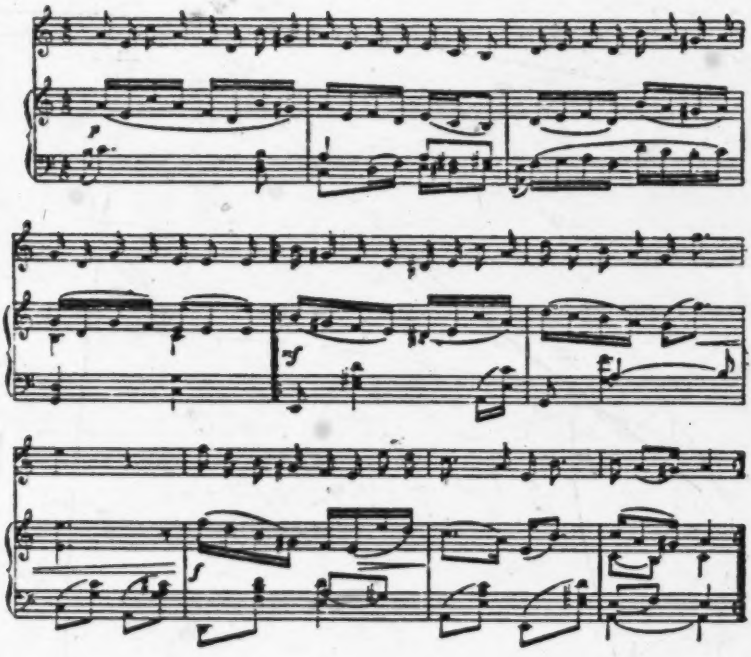
WHISPER OF THE WHITE ACACIAS

(A song in popular style)

533 *Dolce*

By Loránd Fráter



By courtesy of Messrs. Kálmán Nádor, Budapest

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a dispersed low Hindu tribe which reached Europe via Egypt. Hence their name. In about a century they supplanted their Slovene predecessors altogether. The various branches of this extremely servile and adaptable race are to be found in our days practically all over the world, and wherever they settle, with only a few exceptions, they adapt themselves to the requirements of the dominating race and become their popular entertainers and professional musicians. At the same time they tenaciously cling to their own meagre but peculiar heritage, the practice of which they strictly limit to their internal affairs. Their own language and music they speak, sing and play only when they are among themselves. The main reason for their survival in foreign and often hostile circumstances seems to be hidden in the fact that even the most humble social strata of European or Balkan peoples would never allow their presence on an equal footing, to say nothing of inter-marriage or social relations, which were never tolerated. Their extremely different racial characteristics and their racial consciousness, make their assimilation absolutely impossible.

The prolonged presence of the gypsies in Hungary did not remain without consequences upon the development of Hungarian folk-music and folk-dancing. This influence was in a way instrumental in conserving the original Hungarian melodies, but it was also detrimental inasmuch as with their sensuous and rhythmically irregular interpretation the gypsy musicians often distorted the original correctness of the Hungarian rhythm. The rhapsodic timing of rhythm and the excessive speed so characteristic of gypsy music become apparent to the Western European or American listener only when he hears them play some international or classical music well known to him. This incorrect timing and excessive

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533 speed proved detrimental to the Hungarian folk-dance, which, according to the Hungarian national character and to all known testimonies, should be self-possessed in the slow parts and fiery but dignified even in the ornamented and fast parts.

The international popularity of Hungarian gypsy music has its explanation partly in the beauty of Hungarian melodies and partly in the voluptuous sensuality, and in the picturesqueness, of their gypsy interpretation. The gypsy musician is an accomplished practical psychologist who instantly recognizes the taste and mood of his audience, and his emotionally intoxicating music, when shaped to conform to the listener's mood, no doubt "does things to him".

534 Whatever we may think of him, the gypsy is, and has been for centuries, the popular, omnipresent musician of the Hungarian people, and even the instruments they use soon displaced those used by their predecessors. The Hungarians of a thousand years ago danced to the tunes of the koboz, the violin, the pipe, and the drum. The koboz, a short-necked stringed-instrument sounded by plucking, remained popular up to the seventeenth century; the Hungarian square violin, which was sounded with the bow or by plucking, the Hungarian pipe, and the single-decker Shaman drum disappeared earlier. In the seventeenth century the pleasant tárogató, a clarinet of peculiarly Hungarian style, came into use, and throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the bagpipe was also very popular.

Of the more primitive native instruments we can still find today in some places the flute-like whistle of various sizes and types, and different types of the horn; also the so-called rotating viol, with tunable play-strings and some bass strings all placed inside the instrument

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and sounded by the friction of a wooden wheel supported on a hinge on the outside. In some regions we also find a primitive drum made of an earthen pot covered with a tightly-fitting bladder which is sounded with a stem of reed or a tuft of horse-hair. This drum is used today in a few ceremonious games only. 534

All these instruments are falling increasingly into disuse, and are gradually supplanted by such gifts of the industrial era as the accordeon, the zither, and the mouth-organ . . .

The gypsies of Hungary have always used such conventional stringed-instruments as the violin, the viola, the 'cello, and the bass-viol in numbers depending on the size and standing of their band. Besides these strings they have in every band a cimbalom, one of the oldest musical instruments in the world, which the gypsies acquired during their migrations in the East. This instrument — the Latin *cymbalum* — is nowadays used mostly by Hungarian gypsy bands, a fact which gave birth to the popular belief that it was an original Hungarian instrument. It has the appearance of a small criss-cross wired table on frail legs, and is sounded with cotton-padded or bare wooden or metal sticks. In larger gypsy bands we also find the flute or clarinet, sometimes its Hungarian variety, the tárogató.

Fashions, habits, institutions and instruments all change with the passing of time; but whoever plays it, and no matter on what instrument, as long as Hungarian music survives and Hungarian peasant folk exist, there will be dancing for their own pleasure and to the delight of the world.

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PEASANT ART

531

Popular art throughout the world is the art of shaping and decorating. In Hungary, however, in contrast to many places in the modern world, the art of shaping and decorating is still a living reality.

Important parts of the country have remained up to the present immune from the inroads of mass-production, and in these regions the old-fashioned ways of life and the flourishing home-industries which embody the artistic achievements of the people are still open to immediate observation. One can here make comparison between the relics of old and the products of the present which have their roots in the past and carry on the traditions of bygone centuries. Because of the multiplicity and variety of these articles, it is difficult to define the character with a single phrase or to group them under one collective heading. Art takes shape in practically everything the Hungarian peasant uses in his household and around his farm, in his particular rural profession, and also on his own person. Most of these articles are the products of home-industry; they are made by the user himself, under his own roof. They may be classified only according to purpose, the material they are made of, the technique of their production, and sometimes the local or foreign origin of the article itself.

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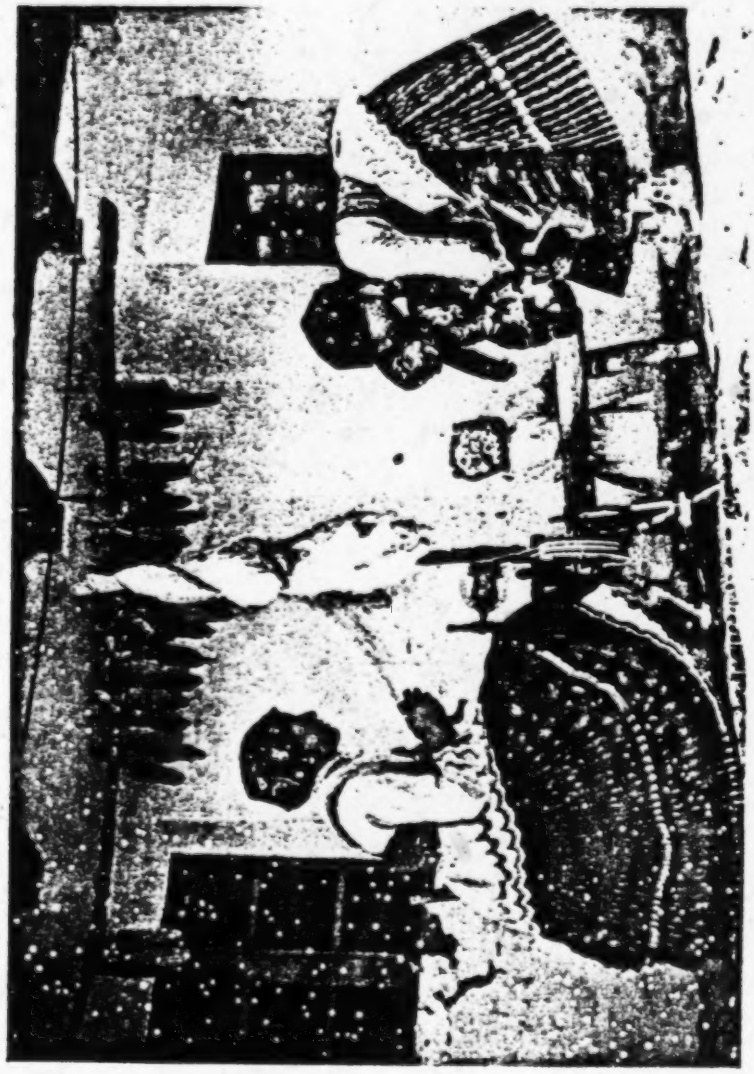

Photo Magyar Filmiroda

WORK AND PLAY

[facing p. 66]

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531 The products of authentic home-industry are characterized before all by the superior quality of the material and workmanship and by the purposeful shape and construction of the article, which is the outcome of experience gathered in the course of many centuries; also, and in no small degree, by the application of decorative elements, which, as if naturally, bend themselves to practical requirements. It is the artistry of the decoration which, strengthened by the mastery of construction and finish, lifts the outstanding achievements of folk-industry into the realm of unquestioned art.

Around the Eastern confines of the country and on the great Hungarian plain, where ancestral occupations, horse and cattle-breeding, and the cultivation of the soil have remained paramount, we find Hungarian applied art still at its best. The scattered population of distant farms, and the herdsmen who spend the greatest part of their lives in the solitude of the plains, are often forced to fall back upon their own ingenuity, and the influence of modern industrialism has so far spared the art-industries of these regions. Here we still find, not only in use, but in the making, the instruments of wood, horn, and bone, carved with infinite care, or inlaid with metal, mother-of-pearl, or the like, by the deft fingers of herdsmen whose exuberant imagination covers everything they touch with the flowers of fantasy. We find also leather goods, woven, embossed, burned, or stamped; the attractive articles of horse-hair, bark, grass, and reed; the instruments of wood; the utensils of metal; a variety of linen-goods, worked with the detail of the finest jewellery; painted pottery; richly embroidered shirts, aprons, leather jackets and fur coats used in everyday life or worn on the red-letter days of local celebrations.

As in other fields, the Pearly Bouquet[1] has exerted a

1 [See category 116, pp. 9-13, 17-20 -- Analyst]

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remarkable influence upon the fate of Hungarian art. As by a miracle the peasantry of the plains has again taken the quaint costumes and implements of old to its heart, and the attachment to its cultural heritage has not only been revived but widened and deepened.

The historic development of these articles and costumes is rather difficult to trace. Some form part of the universal heritage of mankind; others were born of local necessity, in a form determined by local requirements and in accordance with local possibilities. Some, as, for instance, the instruments of the herders, are of the remotest origin and of a character which might be called universal. These articles are practically identical in shape, workmanship, and decoration with the corresponding articles of antiquity and with those usually found in the grave-mounds of the great Hungarian plain, eloquent testimonial of the people's migration. The instinct of the herdsman still creates the same implements, and his inborn skill still lends them the same shape and style which is best suited to the purpose and the material. The roaming imagination of his contemplative nature still decorates them with the same *motifs* as did his ancestors a thousand years ago.

Other instruments, and often the garments of a region, are born of a local fancy: for instance, the tiny top hat of the Matyós, the glowing embroidery that covers their shirt-sleeves or the bottoms of their aprons. The art of the potter is tied to the clay of the soil, and the technique and style of the living potter's craft have descended to him from his forefathers throughout the centuries, from generation to generation. The fancy colouring of linen is in most cases the legacy of Western guildsmen, as is the art of ginger-cake bakers, which has become an inseparable element of Hungarian folk-poesy, and with-

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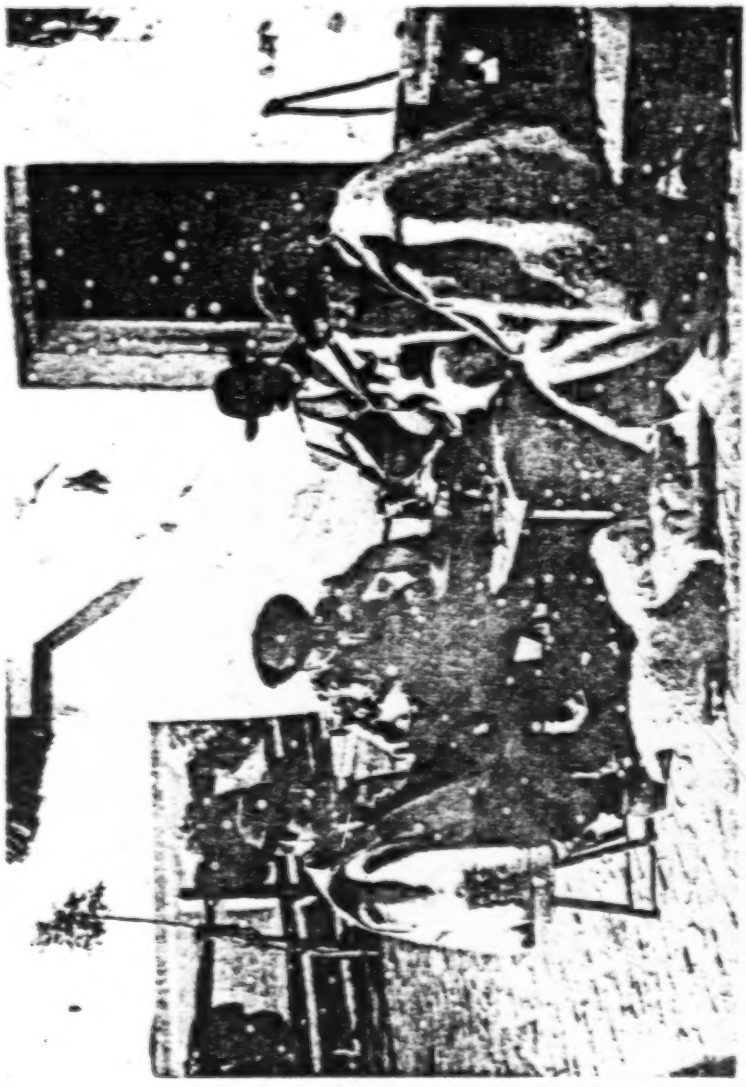

Photo F. Asmann

NOON ON THE PUSZTA

[facing p 68]

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531 out which a village fair would seem devoid of colour and romance.

532 But whatever their distant origin may be, a strong and unmistakable Hungarian quality permeates these articles. It is the same in the primitive decorations cut into the stone of early cathedrals, in the elaborate gate roof of Transylvanian peasant-farms in which the axe of the art-loving farmer imitates on a miniature scale the mighty mass of medieval castles, in the coloured glazing of brittle ginger-cakes which cover the stands of village fairs, and in the thousandfold articles used in the daily life of the Hungarian peasant of today.

Among the features which lend to the Hungarian style its particular character, the most typical are the sharp colour contrasts and that peculiar transposition which reduces the underlying *motif* to a simplified stylization — human figures, birds, animals, the miraculous stag, geometric elements woven into arabesques, and, most frequent of all, flower *motifs* and leaf-designs borrowed from Hungarian plant-life. The asymetric use of the latter offers an infinite field to the inventiveness of the primitive artist, who is limited only by the space to be decorated and by the functional character of the decoration which is a correlative element of his art.

Human or animal figures are generally presented on a field which ignores perspective. Their presentation betrays an astounding sense of perception, but by a peculiar inversion nothing is depicted exactly as it appears in nature, but stylized, transformed, simplified, and as if ennobled by the inner eye, enriched by the recreative imagination of the primitive artist. The leaf and flower-designs appear usually on a strongly contrasted monotone base. The wealth of these *motifs* surges in a whirling deluge of colour and form. It is remarkable that the

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continuity of tradition in the products of different epochs and the affinity of character and style of articles produced in distant regions are so strong that the identity of Hungarian peasant-art through time and space can readily be established not only by the expert, but by the eye of the discriminating amateur as well.

We have mentioned that Hungarian folk-art, other than folk-music and the dance, is typically applied art of a decorative character, and that it embraces everything the Hungarian peasant wears on his person and uses in his household or around his farm. In these circumstances it is only too natural that the Hungarian peasant should give his utmost when making his finery in which he parades before his fellow villagers, which he wears for church and fairs, in which he marries, in which he might be buried, or which his grandchildren and great-grandchildren will wear on such occasions long after he has passed away. But while in practically all other fields of his artistry the elements of his activity are pre-determined by immediate purposefulness, in costume-art the functional elements and the decorative are often subject to fashion which sometimes sweeps away all other considerations. Even here, though, the functional appears behind the surface: the urge of the fashionable is more than a mere sense of imitation or the desire to be up to the supposed call of the times; it is also the wish to be noticed, to be remarked, to be admired, and to be desired. Fashion, of all peoples and of all ages, has for immediate purpose the captivation of the male. If we scrutinize the inherent sense of Hungarian peasant-fashions, or what we might call the costume psychology of Hungarian peasantry, we immediately see how true this is. To the marriageable girl, within the style of her region, custom sets practically no limits in the selection of form and of

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MARRIAGEABLE GIRLS

Photo Mary Filmiroda

[facing p 70]

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colour. The unmarried young man is also allowed to indulge his fancy for the striking and the picturesque. After she has married, the woman immediately tones down the colour and the more extravagant decorations of her costume, and the married man's accrued sense of importance and dignity are plainly marked by the simple cut and the sombre colour of his dress. Old people in rural Hungary invariably dress with the utmost simplicity in which all trace of colour or fancy is absent.

As a rule in Hungarian dress we find the elements of fashion and of the functional in layers superimposed on one another. The wide semi-shorts of white linen and the short neckless linen shirts of the plainsmen are thoughtfully adapted to the requirements of a long day of hard work under the burning sun; work which supposes absolute ease of movement in garments that cover and protect but do not impede. The primitive footwear of the harvester and of the mountaineer — a pliant leather sole attached to the foot with leather straps — also strives for ease of wear and effective protection. The tight-fitting shirt, which descends below the loins, and the long, tight-fitting trousers of the Hungarian mountaineers of Transylvania were dictated by the same practical considerations which led the galloping horse-herders and the cowboys of the great Hungarian plain to select such practical garments as their high riding-boots of soft leather, conforming to the lines of the horse, hats streamlined to defy the winds of the Puszta, and short, bell-shaped overcoats which descend to the back of the horse, not only protecting the body against the elements, but assuring ease of wear and grace of appearance. The cut and construction of the unfinished sheepskin coat of the herdsman is devised to give protection against the wind and the hail of winter days, the frost of the earth, and the

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291 fall of the dew on nights spent on the plains under the stars. The immense fur cloak, made of the skins of at least twelve fully grown sheep, is constructed for the use of several generations. It falls like an umbrella and envelops its wearer from top to toe. Every detail of it praises the ingenuity of its inventor. The fur is worn inside when the weather is bright and is reversed in snow or rain, which drips down the greasy, unwashed surface of natural fur. The high boots worn in the plains guard against the autumn and winter snow. The fur and leather coats resist the inclemencies of the weather and make their wearer insensible to wind or cold.

291 531 Naturally the decorative elements are omnipresent, but their application is strictly subject to practical considerations. The shepherd's coat, one of the oldest and most original of Hungarian garments, furnishes a typical example. The *szűr* of the Hungarian herdsman is a long and heavy coat of felt woven from the homespun yarns of greyish-white, and black domestic wool. The heavy embroidery of the sleeves guards the felt against wear and tear at a place where it is most exposed to friction and use, the straps affixed to the chest are fastened to the coat with what appear to be mere decorations; the role of the apparent decorations, however, is purely utilitarian. Wherever sewing attaches two ends of felt, it assumes the form of embroidery. The rich braiding which covers the upper part of the sleeves and of the chest is reminiscent of the days when the function of the heavy wire braiding was defence against the enemy sword. The artistic application of the defensive wire braiding has survived in the form of decorative *passementeries*, the arrangement of which pays a high tribute to the decorative sense of the simplest Hungarian. The flaplike collar, literally covered with embroidery of astounding beauty, hangs down the

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SPRING FLOWERS

[facing p 72]

Ph. to Magyar Filmiroda

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291 back of the *szür* and seems to aim at no other than deco-
531 rative effect; in reality, this mobile collar may be reversed to guard its wearer from the biting north-western wind blowing down the *puszta* from the Carpathians. To guard his trousers against soiling and wear, the Hungarian
[292] farmer wears an apron of waterproof oilcloth. In some regions a Sunday apron of fine material, richly embroidered at the hem has developed from the protective apron of working-days: for instance, in the Matyó region, where the holiday apron is presented to the boys as a token of love like the engagement kerchief in other districts. Examples similar to this could be cited by the score from the shepherd's overcoat to the peculiarly shaped heavy undergarment of the Hungarian women of Transylvania, which, at some time in the distant past, has served to guard the women-folk of this coveted region against the enforced attentions of the raiding Eastern invaders.

As a general rule it might be said that the man's costume in Hungary varies according to the geographic characteristics of a given region, and the occupation of the wearer. The style of the decoration bears the stamp which is peculiar to that region, and it tends to blend with the functional considerations determined by the various occupations. The elements that have been filtering in from other regions or from foreign countries, and those which have been taken over from the gala of the gentry, or more recently, from the townsfolk, by way of imitation, become with the flow of time assimilated or eliminated altogether.

292 We have noted that in the dress of the womenfolk
531 the more subtle considerations often vie successfully with the regular or the utilitarian. The high boots of the marriageable girls and the young married women are

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292 made of red leather instead of the usual black, and be-
531 tween the inner and outer soles of these high boots, a creaking, squeaking piece of leather is placed so that its sound attracts the attention of everyone within hearing-distance. The slippers made of red leather or of felt in a variety of colours are richly embroidered. The heavy woollen stockings also come in a variety of colours, some plain, some embroidered in contrasting colours; in others in turn rings of various colours form the pattern of the weft. The headgear of the newly-married women is different in practically every village. These little bonnets of fanciful shapes are richly coloured with embroidery or lace, sometimes with both, and there are instances where the lace itself is embroidered to make the effect more singular, more striking. The hips are often filled up with horse-hair or cotton, sometimes a form of felt is attached to accentuate the outlines of the body, and the purpose of more than a dozen petticoats is to lend the skirts that ballooning sway, the rhythm of which does not fail to catch the eye of the man, to appeal to his imagination and to arouse his desire. All this, as we have already said, has for function the attraction and the captivation of the male.

291 It is the privilege of youth to please and to use all the admitted weapons in its armoury of love. In the simple black kerchief or bonnet of the elderly womenfolk the functional elements returns. These bonnets fulfil their original purpose; they hold the hair in place and protect the head of the wearer. With age, the embroideries, laces, ribbons and the like, as well as colour, gradually give way to the enveloping uniformity of a sobre simplicity.

It is the undergarments that preserve for the longest time the traces of their origin and their functional

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THE HERDSMAN

Photo A. Szikely

[facing p 74]

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291 elements, but only as long as they are produced at home. The old-fashioned underclothes, the purpose of which was to cover and to protect, still survive in places, and in a few regions the traditional cut of the open petticoats and refolded skirts and the way they are worn remind us even today of the original skirt which once consisted of an end of material in which the body was enveloped. We also find here and there that the free ends in front of the skirt are refolded as in the olden times, when this was done to allow free movement and to save the cloth from soiling and wear. Today only traces of these elements are to be found. Gradual development and refinement have transformed the type and style of clothing, and the dress of women particularly has been influenced by the fashions of many periods. We can trace many styles superposed upon one another, some of which, depending on circumstances and the taste or the fancy of the inhabitants, have become more pronounced than others and finally have become the universal style in a given village, district, or region of Hungary.

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CALENDAR CUSTOMS

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The substance of Hungarian peasant celebrations is the holiday spirit, which finds its outward expression in the fact that people put on the treasured Sunday best, go to church to pray, eat their festive meals in their whitewashed homes, drink the fiery Hungarian wines, make merry and sing and dance.

We have described the dress, the songs, and the dances of the Hungarian villagers. Let us now throw a quick glance at the occasions of these peasant celebrations, which are occasions not only of purely formal interest but are full of meaning at all times. They actually embrace the most important movements of life; they are the events which in their incessant flow form humanity; the dates which mark the coming and going of the seasons, the happenings on which the well-being, the existence of the Hungarian village itself depends.

To the uninitiated, some of these ancestral customs might have the appearance of mere superstitious practices. In fact, they are filled with a deep symbolic meaning, connected with the primitive wisdom of countless centuries. They all fit into an unwritten ritual and follow one another in an unending cycle year after year. In our descriptions here we have also chosen to follow the course of the seasons throughout the calendar year.

[See category 116, pp. 9-14--Analyst]
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TURNING THE HERD ROUND

Photo F. Asmann

[facing p 76]

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527 We mention in our description a good number of the
796 most typical ones, but one should not think that all are celebrated everywhere. That would mean that the year in Hungary is nothing but an endless celebration — which it definitely is not. Some of the customs on our list characterize this region or profession, some, again, another. What they all have in common, though, is the feeling, and that quality of the genuine which is the truest feature of the Hungarian village.

In the Hungarian village, the New Year greetings are conveyed not only with empty words but by expressive symbolic acts. The old year is "burned" or "chased out", and the New Year is "rung in"; that is, it is greeted with joy and celebration amidst the pealing of New Year bells. One of the most interesting of the surviving New Year customs is "turning the herd round", practised particularly in North-eastern Hungary. Groups of young men go from house to house in the village, and, amid shouts and the cracking of whips, behave as if they were turning the cattle round and driving the herd out to the pastures. The symbolism of this act is evident at the turning of the year, when the cycle of life begins anew. It is no easy matter even for the best of herdsmen to turn a herd of cattle round; it is only just, too, that the role of the herder should fall to the cleverest lad in the village.

796 On the sixth of January, Epiphany is celebrated. Water is blessed in the parish church, after which the priest and his ministrants make the turn of the village to bless the houses with holy water. In various parts of the country groups of young boys or girls representing the three Kings of the Epiphany go from farm to farm, carrying on a pole the miraculous star and singing the song of the Saviour's birth. They mark the doors with

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796 huge chalk letters "G. B. M.", in commemoration of the Magi; Gaspar, Balthasar, and Melchior. They are received and duly rewarded with food and small gifts by the villagers.

According to popular belief based on experience, winter ends about the twentieth of January. On this day, which is that of St Fabian and St Sebastian, the sap begins to rise in the trees, and on St Paul's Day the winter cold is supposed to break.

The events which mark the rebirth of nature become more and more numerous. The second of February is the day of the Happy Virgin Blesser of Candles, upon which, as the name implies, the blessing of the candles takes place. In an unusual ceremony on St Blaise's Day and on Schoolday (February 3rd and 10th) the twigs to be used for grafting are cut out while the children of the village masquerade in the streets as the soldiers of St Blaise, Patron Saint of school-children. In chanted poems they reclaim would-be truants for the alphabet, and for their efforts the villagers reward them with food and sweets. On Shrove Tuesday poppy-seed is sown, vegetables are planted, and the maize for the spring sowing is plucked from the cob. This is a long day both of work and of merry-making, in which every member of the family, the neighbours, and the farm-hands share equally. To make a heavy and tiresome task easier, jokes are told and merry songs are sung for the last time on this closing day of Carnival.

796 292 At the sound of the bells at midnight, the merriment suddenly ends, the gypsies silence their instruments, and everyone returns to his home. On Ash Wednesday the period of Lent begins, which finds its outward expression not only in the complete cessation of dances and games, but also in the fact that the merrily coloured

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796 [292] embroidered skirts of the womenfolk are exchanged for the sombre dark or brown, and the vivid bows in the girls' hair yield to the tempered shades of green and blue. This is also the day of farewell to winter. The season of rain and cold, personified by a trunk or a log, is banished from the village and is burned in the fields or drowned in the village pond.

The eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth of March are the days of St Alexander, St Josephus and St Benedict; they are the popular harbingers of spring who never come without "bagfuls" of summer warmth.

The twenty-fifth of March is the day of the Happy Virgin Grafter of Fruit-trees. The boughs cut on St Blaise's Day are grafted on this day, and the occasion is duly celebrated.

Shortly after, the herds are driven out to the pasture-lands, and even today this is connected in some places with quaint, superstitious practices. Across the gate of the courtyard an iron chain is spread, to "ensure" that the animals will remain welded to the herd as though secured by a chain. On the board bridging the ditch over which the cattle have to pass, an egg is placed so that the animals shall fatten as full and round as the egg. Elsewhere the herd is driven across the embers of birch faggots to purge it of all impurities.

On Palm Sunday colourful religious processions celebrate the Saviour's triumphal entry. In memory of this event pussy willow, gathered by the children the day before, is blessed and taken home, where it will be carefully preserved in the "Holy Corner" of the house until next spring. Perhaps it is even more important that the long, lean days of Lent have at last come to an end. Singing, dancing, and embroidered costumes are restored to their rights, and the straw

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796 and rag effigy of Cibere, the Hunger Prince of trying fast-days, is burned, buried, or drowned amidst singing, laughter, and universal merriment. Spring has come to stay . . .

Throughout Easter week ceremony follows ceremony. On Green Thursday the first fresh vegetable of the year is eaten; the younger men walk all round the village to clean the wells on the green and in the fields. In some places on this night bonfires are lighted to scare away the Spirit of Darkness. On Good Friday the preparations for the Easter feast come to a close. Houses have been scoured and white-washed, the Easter cakes, filled with ground nuts and poppy-seed, have been baked, and the painting of eggs to be presented to the holiday callers has been done with painstaking care and with astonishing artistry. Cooking has also been finished, and the fire has been allowed to go out. It will not be lit again until the first chime of the bells of Holy Saturday. Holy Saturday is celebrated in every parish with a picturesque procession during which the ringing of church bells marks the miracle of the Resurrection. Thereafter fast is broken, and the families sit down to partake of the festive supper of Easter Eve. On Easter Sunday the villagers of some regions take food-baskets containing meat, bread, and eggs to church for blessing. Easter dinner is one of the most important feasts of the year. It is significant that the Hungarian word for Easter means literally "taking of meat", which strongly emphasizes the importance of the event after the endless fasting of Lent.

823] Traces of the old Easter Monday custom of ducking marriageable girls in the well are still to be found. This was supposed to impart the fertilizing power of water — an element of supreme importance to the cultivators of the soil.

[facing p 98]

EPIPHANY

Photo Meyer Films &

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Lt. Karolyi E-4 5 (no date) 1931, EC1 [illegible] EC1

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PALM SUNDAY

[facing p. 80]

Photo Magyar Filmiroda

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796 the soil. Today the girls are still thoroughly drenched in some regions; in others they are simply sprinkled with a few drops of perfumed water, which tends to tone down the original custom to little more than a faint memory of itself. Naturally, the number of well-wishers is most significant as to the popularity of a girl, and therefore, in spite of an apparent reticence, they are only too glad to endure what seems to be an ordeal. In return, Easter eggs, often called "red eggs" from the dominating colour, painted brightly and ornamented with delightful designs, are given to the boys. This gift of eggs is also symbolic: the egg is the seed of life, the symbol of eternal resurrection and fertility.

On St Mark's Day, the twenty-fifth of April, the touching ceremony of blessing the wheat-fields is performed. In Catholic villages the priest and his parishioners go in procession to the fields to perform this picturesque Hungarian ceremony amidst the ocean of waving wheat, chanting the invocation of the Lord's grace, "so that fog shall not strangle, hail shall not batter, storm shall not break, and fire shall not destroy the only hope of a poor nation." In Protestant villages fresh bread is offered to the Almighty with a prayer in evocation of his blessing. Farm-hands are engaged on St George's Day, the twenty-seventh of April, labour contracts are renewed, and the summer clothes, to be worn until St Michael's Day, September 29th (which is the paying-off day of farm-hands), are distributed and put on throughout the country. The months of April and May are the most beautiful months of the Hungarian spring. Field and forest are in blossom, and Nature fulfils the miracle of creation.

527 On the first of May the villages are decorated with green boughs and flowers. The boys of marriageable age,

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527 after having spent the night in merry revelry in the village, erect May trees — slender saplings of which only the crown is preserved, richly decorated with coloured ribbons, kerchiefs, and a variety of odd little ornaments — in front of the houses of their best girls. On this same day the May-walk takes place. The maidens of the village go out to the forest, where they break fresh green boughs which, like the May-tree, they decorate with ribbons, kerchiefs, and other ornaments. Afterwards, in pairs, the long procession of girls parades with graceful, rhythmic movements through every street in the village, singing traditional May-songs.

796 On the Day of the Ascension, which falls always on the fortieth day after Easter, the youngest boys and girls receive their first Holy Communion. The older people gather in procession to offer prayer before the village Crucifix and before every cross erected within the boundaries of the village.

The sixteenth of May is the day of St John, Patron of the waterways and their users. The waterfolk celebrate this day with a colourful procession of brightly illuminated flower-decorated boats, at the head of which, in the most elaborate setting, the statue of the Saint is carried. On the shores, thickly lined with admiring throngs, burning torches are erected.

Urban is the Patron Saint of the vineyards. This Saint's Day, the twenty-fifth of May, is celebrated in the vineyards with a colourful ceremony.

527 Although many warm days of the late spring have
524 gone by, it is only after the feast of Whitsuntide that summer really begins. Whitsuntide is celebrated amidst great rejoicing and with ceremonial games handed down from prehistoric times from generation to generation. The original meaning of these games has become some-

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PIETA

Photo Magyar Filmiroda

[facing p 82]

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527 what faded, but it can still be clearly traced. In some
524 regions the lads organize driving or horse-riding races, in others the roping of the bull is the attraction of the day, which is followed by the election of the Whitsun King, recalling the tournaments of old which gave the setting for the election of tribal leaders. The Whitsun King's symbolic reign lasts only from Sunday noon to Monday evening, hence the much-quoted proverb recalling the brevity and futility of earthly things: "short as the Kingdom of Whitsun".

The election of a Whitsun Queen is another relic of ancient rites, surviving in the form of children's games. In some villages the girls choose one of their own, whom they parade round the village as their deeply veiled Whitsun Queen. They sing merrily the words of the age-old Whitsun song:

> In a rose-tree have I grown
> On Red Whitsun's Day...

and perform little games which recall the invocation of fertility practised in a forgotten past.

796 Corpus Christi is the first Thursday after Trinity Sunday, and is known as the Day of the Lord. It is Hungary's great festival in honour of the Holy Eucharist. Open-air altars are erected on this day in various parts of the villages, and a procession, of which perhaps only the picturesqueness is greater than the solemnity, visits these decorated altars in ritual succession.

One of the most popular and most interesting of the festivals of the summer is celebrated on the Day of St John the Baptist, the twenty-fourth of June, popularly known as St Ivan's Day. Originally the great festival of the summer solstice, today it has descended to us as a midsummer night's dream which reaches

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796 its climax in the mystic dance round St Ivan's fire. In the open fields, under the stars, round St Ivan's fire made of fragrant woods and herbs, lovers are "sung together". There are a great number of St Ivan's songs in which this typical *motif* returns:

> May God send a slow shower
> To wash these two together,
> Like two golden twigs...

796 777 Popular belief attaches much importance to this fire-dance, which is the first of the many acts in the developing of friendship and love between boy and girl which will come to a happy end in the merry marriages of Carnival. One after the other the girls jump across St Ivan's fire, while the rest, dancing round the fire, utter the name of the girl who is jumping, together with the name of the boy whom they know that their friend has taken to her heart. If the jump is successful, there remains no doubt that the desired union of two lovers will come true before the winter is over. Often this dance is an all-girl affair, as if to assure that every girl may unveil her heart's desire without embarrassment. Of course, the boys learn the happy news early enough....

241 527 Soon after, on the twenty-ninth of June, St Peter and St Paul's Day, the wheat-harvest begins. From the point of view of the Hungarian peasant this is the most critical and, everything considered, most important event of the year. To understand the magnitude of the event, it should be remembered that in the Hungary of today, as always in the past, the mainstay of the people has been the yield of the wheat-crop. The lives of millions of farmer-families, countless farm-hands, and share-croppers depend upon a bountiful harvest, and it is

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PAINTING THE EASTER EGGS

Photo Magyar Filmiroda

[facing p. 84]

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241 decided by the yield of the crop how the winter purchases
527 and the many prospective marriages will turn out.

In order that all who need it may share in the
[407] blessings of the harvest, the use of harvesting machinery is not tolerated in Hungary. The role of the labourer has remained an essential part in cutting the crops, and thanks to this, one may still see and admire the
[412] spectacle of swinging scythes working their way into the fields, feiling the swaying wheat into rows that follow the undulating line of valley and hill. After the men come the plucking girls, whose deft and tireless hands bind the wheat into sheaves and pile them up into huge cross-like formations. Harvest must end in the shortest possible time, because the ripe ears easily spill the heavy grain, and it would be a bitter thing to see the price of life falling to waste. From daybreak until the last faint rays of the declining moon harvesting goes on, and once the crop is cut the sheaves are piled upon the carriages and taken to the farmyard to be threshed and preserved in the granary. It is a wonderful sight to watch the immense loads pass by, drawn by a double yoke of long-horned Hungarian oxen, while the slanting rays of the setting sun throw a halo of golden dust round the glittering mass of fresh-cut wheat.

527 As soon as the last of the wheat-crop has been cut, the harvesters prepare for the harvest festival — a feast vibrating with the anticipation of rest and recreation — a ceremony permeated with satisfaction and gratitude, to be followed by the merriment of unbounded celebration. Of the longest stalks of unthreshed wheat a harvest wreath or crown is woven, or, in some regions, a monstrance, a tower, or a bell. The harvest wreath is taken home from the fields hanging on a pole which is placed on the shoulders of the prettiest girls. It is then presented

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527 to the landlord by his harvesters in a little scene of touching simplicity.

"We have woven a beautiful wreath from slender stalks and heavy wheat-ears and from the many lovely flowers of the fields. We have brought it before our lord to join with him in thanksgiving to God for His blessings and a plentiful harvest..."

In similar words the landlord expresses his thanks and throws open the gates to the throng of happy harvesters, to whom he offers a rich meal, casks of wine and pouches of virgin tobacco. The gypsies of the village-end gather as from nowhere, and to the strains of the music, merry songs are sung, to be followed by dancing that has no end...

Corn-husking, towards the end of the summer, and the wine-harvest, in early autumn, are celebrated [245] in a very similar fashion. The gathering of grapes begins in Hungary about mid-October, usually on the Day of St Simon and St Judas. On the morning of the wine-harvest the congregation goes to church. After the invocation of God's blessing, they gather in the market-place, and from there, to the strains of church hymns, the traditional march to the vineyards begins. The solemn hymns soon yield to merrier tunes, which grow brighter and brighter as the march proceeds.

In places the ripening grapes are protected from hungry birds and from thieves until the whole crop is ready to be picked. The birds are scared away by the incessant songs of the girls; the thieves are kept at bay by the presence of the boys. But the group of the latter always stay outside the enclosure reserved for the women-folk.

After the grapes have matured, gay harvesters gather and take them to the press-house. As at the end of the

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HARVEST FESTIVAL

Photo Magyar Festival

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527 wheat-harvest, the grape-gatherers prepare a huge bouquet of fragrant grapes, which they carry around the village or, when the harvesting is done on an estate, present to the landlord in a quaint ceremony. The presentation or the procession of the grapes is followed by the vintage festival, which is one of the merriest and longest of celebrations.

273 527 Wine is the national drink of the Hungarians, and this is clearly brought to light in the merry vintage song which tells that

> The Slovaks all drink brandy,
> The Germans all drink beer,
> The Hungarians drink wine only,
> The very best, my dear ...

796 But long before the wine-harvest there are other red-letter days of great importance. On the twenty-sixth of July, St Anna, the mother of the Virgin, is honoured with picturesque Anna Fairs throughout the country. This fair is somewhat akin to the yearly fairs held on the day of the local Patron Saint, in which trinkets, sweets, scarves, toys, kerchiefs, trumpets, rattles, and teasers are sold from stands richly hung with coloured cracknels and beautifully decorated ginger-cakes, baked in the form of a heart, with a tiny mirror inserted in the centre upon which love rhymes are written in coloured sugar glazing, or baked in the form of a mounted Hussar or other favourite figures of Hungarian fantasy.

The fifteenth of August is the Day of the Assumption. It is also the first day of St Stephen's Week, during which the memory of Hungary's first King and Patron Saint is honoured with country-wide celebrations. The great week ends in the striking procession of the Holy Right Hand on the twentieth of August, which is

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796 doubtless one of the most impressive demonstrations of Christendom. Through the old-world streets of the fortress in Buda, the miraculously preserved Right Hand of the Holy King is followed in veneration by the foremost dignitaries of Church and State and by the picturesque delegations of the guilds and of all walks of life from town and country. A bright and unique note is lent to the procession of the Holy Right Hand by the presence of hundreds of village groups, men and women in their fanciful Sunday best, who have come to offer to the foreign visitors and to the citizens of the Hungarian capital the best samples of their art in the series of representations known as the Pearly Bouquet. Throughout the week, group follows group on the stage where, in a touching holiday spirit, one can witness and enjoy the most typical festivals of the Hungarians in the intense hours of a marvellous and never-to-be-forgotten afternoon.

The leaves begin to take on a shade of scarlet. The twenty-ninth of September is St Michael's Day, St George's autumnal counterpart; farm-hands and labourers receive their pay and the heavy clothes to be worn throughout the severe Hungarian winter. It is a fine occasion for celebrating.

The first of October is the Day of St Demetrius, Patron of Shepherds. On this day the shepherds are engaged for the coming year and the herds are given into their custody; as always in the case of important business, the occasion is followed by a feast, as they say, "for the blessing of the occasion", and by a joyous celebration.

The Day of the Reformation takes place on the thirty-first of October and is observed with great solemnity in Protestant communities.

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796 All Saints' Day, the first of November, is the time-limit for sowing the winter wheat, but St Martin's Day, on the eleventh, is important for more than one reason. The first frost and the first snow of the year are due on this day, whereupon the winter lights are lit for the first time, the stuffed geese yielding the delicious *foie gras* are killed, and it is also the time by which the grape-juice in the press-house has fermented and has turned into the new wine, just in time for the joyous St Martin's fairs.

777 796 Autumn slowly draws to its end. This means more leisure for the men and more work for the womenfolk, whose duty it is to utilize and preserve the products which the work of the men has created. These are also days of courtship, and from St Andrew's Day until Carnival, the girls are busy finding out by tricky little artifices who and what their future husbands will be. Molten lead poured into a pot of cold water will discover the occupation of the groom-to-be, while his name can be found out by hiding little slips of paper upon which names have been written in the dough of dumplings eaten with the evening meal.

St Lucia's Day, on the thirteenth of December, is another day when fortunes are told and omens are read. Groups of children known as "cacklers" go from house to house to wish the housewives great numbers of poultry and plenty of eggs:

> Lucia, Lucia, cackle, cackle,
> May your hens lay plenty of eggs,
> May your cow give plenty of milk,
> Lucia, Lucia, cackle, cackle...

If they are duly rewarded with food and sweets, the housewives should have no worries as to the fulfilment of the good wishes.

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Throughout Advent, Christmas, and about New 796
Year's Day, many games of this nature are played, and old-fashioned custom follows old-fashioned custom in quick succession. One of the most characteristic of the latter is the Minstrel Circuit, which, perhaps more than any other Hungarian custom, has preserved traces of bygone heathen times. A number of young lads, sometimes only a few, sometimes as many as forty, gather to sing the minstrel songs of old, to make the round of the village, to call at every house, and to sing the fortune of the farmers. Some of the minstrels are supposed to represent animals ; one of them is the bull or the miraculous stag of Hungarian mythology. The bull or the stag is chained round the neck, and the end of the chain is attached to the hand of one of the minstrels. The rest of the minstrels are equipped with heavy wooden clubs, with which they beat out the rhythm of their monotonous recital. Still others carry a peculiar drum-like instrument made of an earthen pot covered with a tightly-fitted bladder, in the middle of which a reed is stuck. It is called the "bull" and gives off a peculiar droning noise when a wet finger is drawn across the bladder. The Minstrel circuit takes place on the twenty-fifth of December, that is, on the day of the winter solstice. Small wonder that in the monotonous chant of the versified rhymes of the minstrels there is a strange captivating quality which recalls the magic of ancient heathen rites, the saga of the miraculous stag, and the strength of unconscious beliefs which a thousand years of practising Christianity could not entirely obliterate.

To the farmer the minstrels "sing" a pair of fine oxen, a golden plough, and a golden whip ; to the housewife they "sing" a fine milch cow with calf, and a couple of fat pigs ; to the marriageable girl a desirable

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796 husband; and to the newly married a baby or a pair of sturdy twins.

527 Some time in the month of December the fattened pigs of the farm are slaughtered. Like harvest, it is one
262 of the great days in the peasant household. Meat and lard, smoked ham, sausages, and that all-important staple of the Hungarian peasantry, bacon, that will fill the larder and feed the family throughout the winter months are deftly prepared in the course of a single day, in an effort in which every member of the household, the neighbours, and the friends of the family participate. It is a double holiday for the children. They are allowed to stay away from school to help their parents at home. If the yield is up to expectation, there is good reason for all to be happy. A fresh meal is prepared with the finest ingredients: a rich soup, a variety of meats, sausages, *sauerkraut*, sweets, and wine compose the festive meal in which all who have helped at the slaughter partake amidst an outburst of merry-making, contentment and happiness. Song follows song, to be interrupted only by a toast or a joke.

796 Christmas brings to the country one of the most deeply felt Hungarian holidays. After a day of fasting and tension during which presents are prepared and the fragrant Christmas pine is decorated, Christmas Eve, the anniversary of the miraculous birth, descends. The tiny coloured candles on the trees are lit, and in an atmosphere of peace and quiet happiness the presents are distributed by God's Angel. After the festive meal, Christmas carols are sung, children play themselves to sleep with their new toys, while the adults of the family and the older children prepare for Midnight Mass. It is an experience of rare charm and intensity to witness the small groups of peasants, bundled up in heavy winter

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furs and knitted woollen shawls, hurrying from all directions towards the snow-clad village church. The heavy steps creak on the newly fallen powdery snow; in the air of crystal purity the clear voice of the bells summons the faithful to come and pay homage to God Who has descended from Heaven to suffer for mankind on earth. 796

On the following night the music of jingling bells is heard. It is the Bethlehem players who make their yearly round. Their plays are devoted to the Saviour's birth, but they also recall the ancient solstice rites; on the twenty-fifth of December the light of the life-spending sun begins to lengthen again. Introduced into medieval Hungary by the Franciscans, the Bethlehem play has become part of Hungarian folk-lore and has remained one of its most graceful customs. The simple words and tunes are very much the same all over the country, although the number and the sex of the actors vary in the different regions. Mostly they are boys; only here and there are the actors young girls led by an elderly woman. The play itself is usually of a religious character. The players, six boys representing King Herod, Joseph, two Angels, and two shepherds, are preceded by the envoy or runner, whose role it is to spy out the hospitable houses, visit in succession every farm, and wherever, in answer to the runner's call, the doors of a farmhouse have been swung open, we hear the melody of the age-old song: "An Angel from Heaven has descended to you, shepherds, shepherds." In some villages at the end of their circuit the Bethlehem players place their tiny crate at the altar of the parish church. We also find villages where there are comic Bethlehem plays, while in others, a quaint survival of the Middle Ages, the Bethlehem marionettes amuse the villagers.

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IN THE SPINNERY

Photo Magyar Filmiroda

[facing p 92]

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796 On the twenty-seventh of December the Hungarian peasant has his wine-casks blessed, whereupon he drinks the grace of St John, which is held to give strength and to ensure good health for him who has partaken of it.

The twenty-eighth of December is the collective day of the minor Saints who have no day of their own in the calendar. This day is observed in Hungary by a peculiar old folk-custom known as the "whipping of the innocent". The lads and men administer a sound whipping to the girls or their wives with a birch or willow twig which, by being kept in warm water indoors, has just begun to bud. The victim of the whipping, which is administered in the hours of dawn, is assured of becoming healthy, fresh of foot, beautiful, and fertile. The bud is the symbol of creation and of fertility.

883 Closer and closer we come to the end of the year. The merry days of Carnival are here, and it is the law of life that youngsters grow up, the grown-ups age, and those who have reached maturity settle down in married life to found a family to perpetuate the race and its traditions. Winter time is the time for courtship, and is there any better place for the boys to meet girls and for the girls to meet boys than in the spinnery?

Among all the quaint institutions of Hungarian folk-lore, we can hardly think of any quainter, more romantic, or merrier than the spinnery. Romantic it is naturally, because the origin and the immediate end of the spinnery are, as they always have been, romance. It is the age-honoured institution of finding a mate, which has, however, sometimes aroused the reasoned sobriety of the clergy, as has been mentioned in the chapter on folk-dancing. It is the institution into which the romance of St Ivan's Day has fled and in which the sacred flame of love is still burning as ever.

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583 To be accurate, there are really two types of spinnery. One is that of the girls, and the other is reserved for the married women. This latter is a place of serious work where the gossamer-like threads for fine Sunday linen and the sturdy material of heavy service goods are spun. The girls' spinnery is different. It is the place where the young girls who are approaching womanhood learn how to turn the spinning-wheel, the finely carved handle of the distaff, and also how to "turn the heads of men", as the winning of a man's love is popularly known. It is more than anything else a place of play and of merry-making, an outlet for gaiety after work, a place which will close its doors at the end of Carnival.

Spinning for spinning's sake is monotonous, tiresome work. To make it more interesting the girls mix it with song and play. It is only too natural that the songs should be songs of love and the games allude to the purpose of the spinnery: love and marriage. To make sure of success, spinning is done in the late afternoon and in the evening, when it is certain that all the eligible men are free and ready to yield to the temptations of the spinnery. While the girls busy themselves with work and play, the boys gather at the inn or in front of the house of one of them, and thence, to the tune of merry, mischievous songs, they approach the spinnery. The girls inside act as if they were deeply absorbed in their work and apparently do not notice the boys, who drift in slowly and take seats on the benches along the wall. But soon one of the girls will drop her spindle; a boy will pick it up with the speed of a hawk and return it for no lesser ransom than a kiss. Games and jokes of all sorts and kinds follow. Riddle games are played, jokes are told, the old spinnery songs are sung till a

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883 late hour, and until closing time, at midnight, the place is alive with the merriment of witty improvisation.

The purpose of the final game is to bring two lovers face to face, and when the double row facing each other is complete, someone will — as if by accident — put out the lights, and while they are being lit again (and it takes some time to light an old-fashioned oil-burner) hearts will throb together and lovers' lips unite in a passionate kiss.

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MARRIAGE

Winter is the season of rest for the tiller of the soil — the season of rest well-deserved. It is also the time of merry-making and of marriages, the majority of which are held during the winter months and during Carnival. The barns at this time are full of wheat, the cellars full of wine; hams and sides of bacon are maturing over the smoke of the log-fire in the open fireplace. An air of hopefulness and contentment pervades the village. Boys and girls have worked together during the year from the sowing of spring wheat to the day of maize-plucking, and have joked in the spinnery and danced in Carnival. Romances have developed which come to fulfilment before the new working year begins. The girls who have not found husbands are teased in addition to being disappointed: "Shrove Tuesday has come, you were left at home, Carnival has passed, for you no one has asked . . ."

Among all the festive occasions of the Hungarians the ceremony and the celebration of the wedding are supreme — supreme in all respects. We say ceremony and celebration because however closely-knit the two appear to be, they are still two distinct things. Marriage is the lifelong union of two people, entered into according to the age-honoured traditions and rites of the Hungarian people. The celebration is the outward expression of

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581 the joy which the two clans of the newly wedded couple feel and through which they share in the satisfaction which the union of two of their own means both to the race and to themselves.

581 584 According to a wise old Hungarian saying, youth should marry, but the selection of a mate should take place not only through the eye, but also through the ear. That is to say, not desire and passion alone, but reason also should decide the choice. Love is a natural thing and a fine one, but parents know that while marriages are no doubt made in Heaven, they are none the less lived down here upon the earth. It is youth's privilege to love, but it is the privilege and duty of age to help to make a wise choice; and so it is done. The reasons for and against are carefully weighed, and the young folk, trusting the wisdom of the old, bend their fate to their elders' decision. If love is there also, all the better... There are as many marriage customs in Hungary as there are villages, the order and symbolism of which is the outcome of reason, experience, and, in many cases, force of time-honoured tradition.

Hungarian marriage is endogamic. Its motto is "same village, same section, same street", which really means that Hungarian custom favours the marriage of young people of the same religion and of the same general standing. This is in part responsible for the fact that in spite of the substantial admixture of foreign nationalities, the Hungarian population of whole regions has definitely descended from early Hungarian settlers, and it is also an illuminating example that the hierarchy of social classes is not unknown to peasantry itself.

584 Normally the choice of the daughter-in-law is the privilege of the boy's parents, after due consideration and the comparison of possibilities in which they often make

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use of the services of "recommending women", known 584
to the less respectful as "gossip-bags". Once their choice has been made they impart it to their son, and the first step in a long, ceremonious proceeding is now his. Before his first visit, however, an envoy of the family, usually an elderly aunt, calls at the girl's house to make sure about the other party's willingness. This first enquiry, like all the ensuing steps, is done with little, symbolic acts shrouded with an air of mysterious secrecy. If the findings of the envoy are promising, the boy will make his first call. Often he does that in the guise of a farm-hand looking for work, a farmer looking for hay for his cattle, or some similar device. In one region he knocks at the door and asks for a light for his pipe. The light is usually offered, but if the mother instead of the daughter opens the door and her answer is that the light has gone out, that means that they have decided otherwise. If the boy is accepted favourably his flask will be refilled before his departure, but if his coat is placed before the door that means that they did not like him and that he has symbolically but definitely been shown out of the house... If the boy and his family have not previously known the girl who has been proposed to them, the whole family of the boy participates in the first visit, which is called the "inspection of the daughter". If their liking is mutual, the ceremony of asking in marriage follows in a few days. The boy and his best man call at the girl's house, and in the course of a pre-arranged meal, which has, however, the appearance of a casual event, they make their intentions known. The acceptance, which is given in the same fashion, is only conditional, and the final outcome depends on the results of a return visit of the girl and her family to the boy's house. This is known as the "inspection of the housefire".

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584 The thorough inspection of house and farm is followed by a meal which is meant to give an occasion to the girl and her parents to express their opinion. If they accept a meal and the girl partakes of it, then they are pleased with their visit; but if they do not eat, or if the girl does not touch food and drink, that means that they have come to the conclusion that the boy's house, farm, or family is not considered a setting good enough for them.

583 It is significant that the Hungarian word for the bridegroom, *vőlegény*, literally means "buying man", and that for a marriageable girl, *eladó lány*, "girl for sale". The survival of these names is more than a mere relic, and the formal engagement is today, as always in the past, preceded by the colourful scene of the ancient "buying-selling" agreement. This agreement, which might be oral or written, defines the "buying-price" and stipulates the rights of the future wife, among others the so-called widow rights, that is, her title to board and lodging in case she survives her husband or if there is no issue of the marriage. The price of the girl is nowadays money and clothes, the amount of which depend on local custom, the financial standing of the boy, and the importance and the desirability of the girl's family. The girl's dowry, which usually balances her "selling-price", consists of a chest of clothes, linen and bedding, all of which together is called the girl's "bed". The deliberations, every phase of which is strictly fixed by custom, take place in dead earnest, and only when every point is duly settled do the parties sit down to the festive meal prepared for the occasion. On the evening following the buying-agreement, the boy and his best man call again to go through the ceremony of formal engagement, which is known as the "handshake", because that is the form it takes between

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the bride and groom. During the handshake or immediately after, the boy hands to the girl a gold or a polished silver coin often stuck into a red apple, and therewith the "buy", that is, the engagement, is concluded. The girl reciprocates with a finely embroidered handkerchief, the "token kerchief", and a tiny bouquet called the "engagement bouquet" to be worn by the boy on his hat until the day of the wedding. The best man then blesses the engaged couple and expresses his opinion that the boy should be entitled hereafter to call freely to see his fiancée. Then all present drink to the happy outcome of the engagement; this is called the "blessing of the deal", after which the groom and his best man take leave, but not before the girl has presented her fiancé with a silver coin and the best man with a kerchief or scarf offered on a plate. During the engagement the groom is allowed to visit his fiancée regularly, and custom demands that he should call at least once a day. During this time the girl sews and embroiders the splendid engagement shirt that the boy will wear on the day of their wedding. The shirt is made of material spun and woven by the bride herself.

On the Sunday before the wedding-day the selection of assistants, best man, and bridesmaids takes place. In some parts the best man and the witnesses are chosen outside the family because of their clever versification, which stands them in good stead at every turn, their glib-tongued wit, and their popularity; in others they are regularly chosen from within the family, as are usually all the bridesmaids.

The marriage itself takes place usually on a Wednesday, a day, according to popular belief, well suited for a happy start. The invitations to the wedding and to the ensuing banquet are effected with the aid of a number of special assistants. These "inviters", dressed in their

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Photo Magyar Filmiroda

THE "BED"

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585 Sunday best, their hats decorated with flowers and ribbons, make three consecutive calls in the afternoon of the last three days before the wedding. All who have been invited call on the day preceding the wedding at the bridegroom's house to offer their wedding-presents: useful articles, decorations for the wedding-table, and choice foodstuffs and wines which will be placed upon a plate before their seat at the banqueting-table and which, once the banquet is started, will be offered round to the guests.

The meat that will go into the delicious dishes of the banquet, unbelievable quantities of poultry, a whole ox, calf, lamb, and pig, is also prepared on the eve of the wedding-day. The dressing of meat is followed by a merry "slaughtering-banquet".

On the day of the wedding the soups, dishes of meat, and cakes are prepared in the courtyard on big open fireplaces, while the wedding-cake, an enormous cake with fancy decorations, is baking in the tiled-oven of the farm, which has to be taken to pieces before the cake can be lifted out and placed upon its beribboned pedestal. In front of the houses of the engaged couple young saplings are erected by their friends. On the boy's trees farming-implements, and on the girl's trees cooking utensils, are hung along with coloured ribbons, kerchiefs and scarves.

The "bride's bed", that is, her trousseau and bedding piled high upon a bed, is taken to the groom's house in an open carriage and over the longest possible route, so that the greatest number of people can see and admire it. Once the carriage is on its way, drawn by beribboned horses of the groom amid the jingling of silver bells attached to their necks, some friend will smash an earthen pot against one of the wheels while everybody around

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585 will shout his wish that the couple shall part no sooner than the fragments have become a new pot again... Often the pillows of the bride are taken to the boy's house in a colourful marching-dance, called the "pillow-dance", by the girl friends of the bride.

Shortly before the church wedding, the "bewailing of the bride", the counterpart of the groom's farewell banquet, takes place. This is a typical celebration offered by the bride's parents to their daughter and her friends.

In the morning hours the assistants and friends of the two parties gather at their respective houses amidst cheerful banqueting, music and dancing.

When the proper time has arrived the bridegroom signals for the departure, and after the best man has bidden him farewell in the name of the bachelors' corporation, accompanied by his assistants and the gypsy band, he drives over to the bride's house. Admittance there will be granted to him only after protracted negotiations and after the best man has cut through the rope of straw with which the gate has been fastened. This is one of the picturesque remnants of those olden times when the bride was often forcibly abducted. After the admittance of the groom's party, the crying bride once more kisses her parents and her relations, who then hand her over to the custody of the best man. At this moment the band strikes up a merry tune, and the bridal procession, crowded into beribboned carriages, drives to the parish church. After the benediction of their wedding the young couple offer bread and wine to the priest, and in the meantime the younger set performs in the churchyard a dance known as the "dance of the priest".

After the ceremony the two households return to their respective homes, where a rich meal and a variety of drinks are consumed "to the health" of the newly-

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585 weds. This meal is followed by the handing of the wedding-presents to the bride.

All the time messenger after messenger is sent on behalf of the bridegroom urging the bride to get ready for the final departure. As in the morning, the arriving bridegroom is again hindered by a feinted struggle and a prearranged discussion. Finally consent is given, the best man pronounces the bride's farewell, and the deeply veiled, crying bride mounts into the carriage which is to take her to her new home. The carriages are gaily beribboned, the horse and the whip are decorated with coloured cracknel wreaths. In the rear carriage the gypsy band plays tune after tune, and if the trip is long, or if the bridegroom is from another village, at leaving the village boundaries all descend to take part in the so-called "station-dance".

[591] Meanwhile everything has been prepared at the bridegroom's house for the bride's reception. She is greeted on the doorstep by her mother-in-law, who offers her welcome and a lump of sugar with the words: "May your stay in our house be as sweet as this lump of sugar". The womenfolk of her new family throw upon her a handful of wheat, symbol of fertility. Before entering, the bride has to cross the embers of birchwood. This is called the "singeing of the bride" and symbolizes her purification. The bride's request for admittance is followed by a solemn welcome. She is shown into the house and taken to the fireplace, where often a burning torch, the symbol of vigilance, is handed to her. Afterwards she partakes of the first meal with her husband, during which they eat from the same plate and drink from the same glass. Sometimes only the man eats, with the bride standing by. This is a symbol of service and obedience.

A thousand little local customs, the purpose of which

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is to invoke the blessing of Heaven, fill up time before the high-light of the day, the wedding-banquet, begins. 585

The place of honour at the long end of the table facing outwards is occupied by the newly-weds. In front of them the Tree of Life, a fresh bough hung with nuts and apples is erected. Before grace the whole gathering joins in merry songs, many of which refer to the happy occasion. Then grace is said and the banquet begins. The candles on the Tree of Life are lit. The bride takes a fruit from the tree and offers one to the bridegroom. The remaining fruit is handed round to the guests. The plates and jugs containing the foods and drink presented by the guests are offered first, and afterwards the regular courses are taken round. Innumerable courses follow one another from early afternoon until midnight. The newly wed couple eat from the same plate, drink from the same glass, and use the same wooden knife, fork and spoon. Toasts are said by the men in order of their importance; spirits rise, and joking begins, with a multitude of witty improvisations. Meanwhile the gypsies play without interruption until midnight, when the traditional "dance of the cooks" takes place. The women who have assisted the family in preparing the banquet come in from the kitchen dressed as cooks, with the cooking-utensils in their hands. Assisted by the music, they perform their dance, after which a collection, called the "pap money", is made for them. After this dance the guests rise, and before the general dancing begins, the musicians and those who have waited at table are served. The hall is cleared to make room for dancing, which begins with the dance of the bride. She dances a turn with all the male members of her new family which symbolizes her initiation and her acceptance by the clan.

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585 This is the hour at which the bride's family and her relations arrive to join in the celebration.

At a prearranged moment the best man puts out the lights, and to the tune of the "candle-dance", three candles are lit and the bride is handed over to the bride-
[302] groom. He leads her out to the courtyard or to one of the outer rooms, where her hair is "put up" into a knot and her "head is tied in" with the married woman's bonnet. Therewith she is officially admitted to womanhood, and when she returns to the dance it will be as a woman "in her own right". Immediately upon her entry into the room somebody will shout "the bride is for sale!" and then the dance of the bride is on. After they have placed a coin — the price of the bride — on a plate, all men present dance round with her. Those who, on account of age or infirmity, are unable to dance, pay none the less, while the obliging best man dances their turn for them. The last man to dance with her is the bridegroom. He places a large sum of money on the plate already heaped with silver coins (it is the pin-money for the bride), makes a sudden whirl with his bride, and then both rush out of the room. They mount to the loft, where, set on the floor, a table laden with choice foods, a bottle of wine sweetened with honey, and the open bridal bed await them. They taste the food and sip the sweet wine; the bridegroom takes off one of his high boots and, with the words "I am your master", gently touches with it the forehead of his bride. Then together they pull up the ladder leading to the ground floor, and while the bride shyly turns away, the bridegroom slowly closes the door.

Downstairs, meanwhile, the dance and feasting continue. The celebration usually lasts until the break of dawn. In rich families, however, the celebration lasts as long as there is food and wine to serve. Wedding-ban-

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quets of three days or more are not a rarity even today. 585
The parents of the newly-weds usually sit somewhere in the background, often on the clay bench of the immense tiled-stove. The bride's father speaks of the brilliance of the celebration and the success of the feast. The bridegroom's father thereupon remarks modestly: "We are poor but we are living well".

On the floor an exultant youth shouts his overflowing happiness: "We never die!" And feasting, dancing, and the general merriment go on and on until the distant end . . .

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BÉLA PAULINI

Photo Vi-Ismayi

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BÉLA PAULINI,
GARDENER OF THE PEARLY BOUQUET

His ancestor was an artist, a soldier or a merchant of the Italian Renaissance who came to Hungary to spread the art of Florence, to sell the silks of the Levant, or to fight the Turks in the army of the Kings of Hungary. Whichever he did, he never went back to his homeland . . . The fascination of Hungary, the undulation of the declining Alps towards the infinite vistas of the great Hungarian plain and the Orient, the silvery glitter of the Blue Danube carrying the treasures of the sunny South to the lands of the misty North, the endless horizon of the rolling lowlands, the haunting nostalgia of the music, the fire of dances never before witnessed, the strange beauty of the women, and the spirit of a knightly race captivated him. He married and became a Hungarian in all but name, like so many others who shared this fate before and after him.

Four hundred years later his soul was reborn in a descendant to rediscover the fascination of Hungaria and to lose his heart again to the strange, exciting beauty of the land of the plains, to the sparkling, spicy spirit of its people with the regal demeanour, its nostalgic music, its fiery dances, its unbelievable wealth of melodies, and to the richness in content, in form, and in colour of all things Hungarian.

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000 His love, admiration, and the conquering surrender of his imagination for all that is Hungarian dominated him from childhood ; he became the wandering bard, the lone echo of the Hungarian folk-soul which enveloped him with the reflection of its irresistible charm, at first inarticulate in its urge for expression.

He collected, re-told, and illustrated the Hungarian fairy-tales for the children of the great cities, and with his sketches of the Hungarian peasants' life he brought back a ray of the warm, sunlit plains and of the sparkling Orient to the grey, uniformed masses of the town. Here and there his articles on Hungarian peasant lore found their way into the daily Press, and his stories, echoing the lovely fairy-tales heard from the lips of his mother, a noblewoman of old Hungarian stock, animated by the humour, spirit, and fantasy of the Hungarian peasant, were the delight of those with imagination for simple things.

He has always been considered original, but — with the notable exception of a few — nobody conceded him much importance. His first true success was the libretto for *Háry János*, the great and singularly Hungarian opera by Kodály. But who else in fact could have adapted as marvellously the immortal character of Sergeant János Háry, the glib-tongued veteran of the King's Hussars, to the footlights as did Paulini, who, with his uncanny feeling for the natural, transplanted to perfection the vibrating enchantment of the mirage of the Hungarian plains to the operatic scene?

In 1930 the City of Budapest, great patron of Hungarian arts, took up the idea of bringing the Hungarian countryside to town in an attempt to bring together the two elements of national existence which had drifted so distressingly far apart.

Once a year the whole nation unites in solemn remem-

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brance of its beginnings, to commemorate its first King, St Stephen, and in the procession of the Holy Right Hand the whole country pays tribute to the Apostolic Monarch whose right hand has been miraculously preserved through the ages to keep guard over the land it founded and in which it has remained the object of everlasting reverence.

Here was an opportunity, and it was decided to stage a folk-festival on St Stephen's Night, in which the actors were to be the simple representatives of the Hungarian country-folk, and the theme the infinite variety of Hungarian folk-character.

Paulini was selected for the task, and his collection of the thousand-fold self-expression of an unusual people's vibrating soul later became what is known today to all Hungarians and to many thousands from all foreign lands as the amazing Pearly Bouquet.

Paulini has been the driving spirit and the vehicle itself of this wonderful feat, which truly enough is nothing less than the miraculous revival and the spell-binding flowering of the Hungarian folk-soul in its numberless aspects.

Béla Paulini is fifty-eight, a man of medium height and indefinite age. In his dark dress of unusual cut, which stands somewhere between the country clothes of the landed squire and the Sunday best of the church-going plainsman, he is a typical figure. Enveloped continuously in the fragrant clouds of violet of his heavy cigars or his stocky peasant pipe, he stands virtually screened off from that part of the outer world which he declines to accept as his own. The glow of his expressive eyes radiates the dreaming warmth of his soul, the mischief of a roguish child, and the merry-eyed shrewdness of a horse-dealer in turn or all at once; their expression

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OOO betrays his every mood, so prone to change with every thought. With his long, tousled moustache he resembles the very Háry János of the tales; before he speaks he brushes this moustache aside with an odd little gesture all his own, as if making way for a grin, a wide ringing laugh, one of his all-expressive grimaces, or a radiant, happy smile whenever he speaks of his eternal topic: the Hungarian peasant and the Pearly Bouquet.

A master psychologist with the simple, he never misses the tone or form appropriate to the occasion among the peasant folk. With townspeople he is reserved, with newspapermen abrupt, somewhat uneasy, and a little awkward; ironical with so-called folk-lore experts or the self-styled amateur of peasant art, he becomes furious at the thought that irresponsible pedlars are trading in imitation peasant art, and he lashes out wildly at what he calls the itinerant highwaymen from the towns who are raiding the treasured ancestral relics of the peasant in distress, relieving him momentarily of his embarrassment, but robbing him at the same time irretrievably, and with him the whole country, of a patch of colour, of an embroidered garment, a swinging, pleated skirt, or a bonnet of glowing velvet and silk, dream-born creations of great-grandmothers of forgotten times, wrought with the tender love that can be felt only by one who is working on a piece to be worn by herself on her wedding-day and by the endless row of brides to be born of her own blood.

"The Old Man" or "Mr. President" to his countless friends, "Uncle Béla" to his villagers, "Mr. Editor" to the waiters, and "Master" to stage-hands, newspapermen, and the like, he personifies the likeable unusual, the seriously jovial, the sometimes bizarre, the always human, the ever-changing yet always the same. Time and money have no sense, no meaning for him. His home, a simple little flat

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kept spotlessly clean by an admiring and often very lonely wife, hidden in one of the nameless, dark little streets in the midst of the stone wilderness of the town, is just a place to stay at between long jaunts round the countryside, the next one beginning almost as soon as the last one has ended. It is also a place in which to keep the many souvenirs rained upon him by the countryfolk in loving, admiring remembrance.

As a miracle of unorganized but far-reaching and lasting efficiency, Béla Paulini could be the envy and admiration of any Western "promoter", and what is still more particular about him is that he has no office, no staff, no dictaphone, no car, no secretary, not even a desk or a single note. His only tool, the only medium of his success, is his splendid mind and his radiant personality so marvellously tuned for the purpose and so perfectly equipped for all occasions. He remembers almost every face he has ever seen and every voice he has ever heard; he can call by name the countless thousands he has met during his unending trips, and his photographic memory catches indelibly every movement, every colour, and every note of all the melodies in the inexhaustible treasure of Hungarian folk-art.

His "study", if he happens to be in Budapest, is in the darkest corner of a coffee-house, at an end table close to the telephone booths. The table and the floor all around are littered with crumpled sheets of the cheapest writing-paper, on which his awkward script tumbles about in a childish up-and-down. Sketches of country scenes and the rough outlines of surging inspirations mingle with odd notes; names and melodies follow one another in bewildering disorder, to be reborn later in the flawless presentation of an unforgettable performance during St Stephen's Week. Files he does not keep; his

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000 correspondence he almost throws to the winds, and of what he writes or sketches he keeps track only in his extraordinary memory.

In our age of mechanical achievements, amidst its systematized concentration and the division of its functions, he is a strangely surviving anachronism dominating with his keen senses, his faith, his love, and his vision, all the problems of time, distance, and financial needs. With his indefatigable enthusiasm he supplies all the missing requirements of a nation-wide organization, the substance of which he embodies and radiates to the most remote parts of the country, while in an apostle-like fashion, he carries the idea to a striking, convincing, and irresistible success.

As an animator of men he is a unique phenomenon and has accomplished more than could be expected from any single human being. As the revivalist of the disappearing folk-art of a nation, he has earned the admiration of all and the gratitude not only of Hungarians, but of all those throughout the world who have understanding for the beautiful and love for the natural simplicity, the surging force of an art born and animated by the native soil.

Recently Béla Paulini was granted the freedom of the village of Buják, one of the first villages in which he started to collect the wild flowers of the Pearly Bouquet.

The honorary citizenship was bestowed upon him in the presence of the whole village. Old and young in Sunday best filled the large market-place to overflow to watch the impressive ceremony. After the parade of the local chapter of the Pearly Bouquet before the assembled notabilities, the presiding magistrate expressed the meaning and the significance of the occasion by a single sentence devoid of any phraseology: "In appreciation of what he has done for our country and for us," he said,

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"our community has decided unanimously to bestow its freedom upon a true and good Hungarian, Béla Paulini, who has discovered for the world and for ourselves what we really are".

Paulini was to answer with a few words, and when his turn came he took the platform. After repeating more and more hesitantly "My good friends... my good friends," his voice suddenly sank, and before the admiring gathering of simple country-folk and assembled notables, two big, glistening tears rolled slowly down his ruddy, unshaven cheeks...